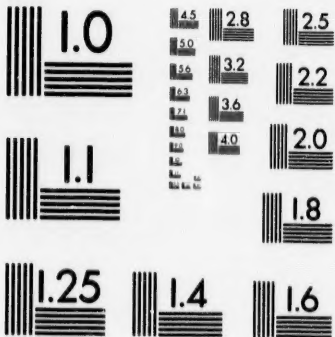




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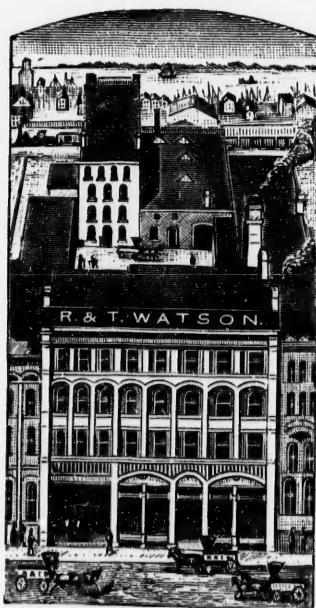
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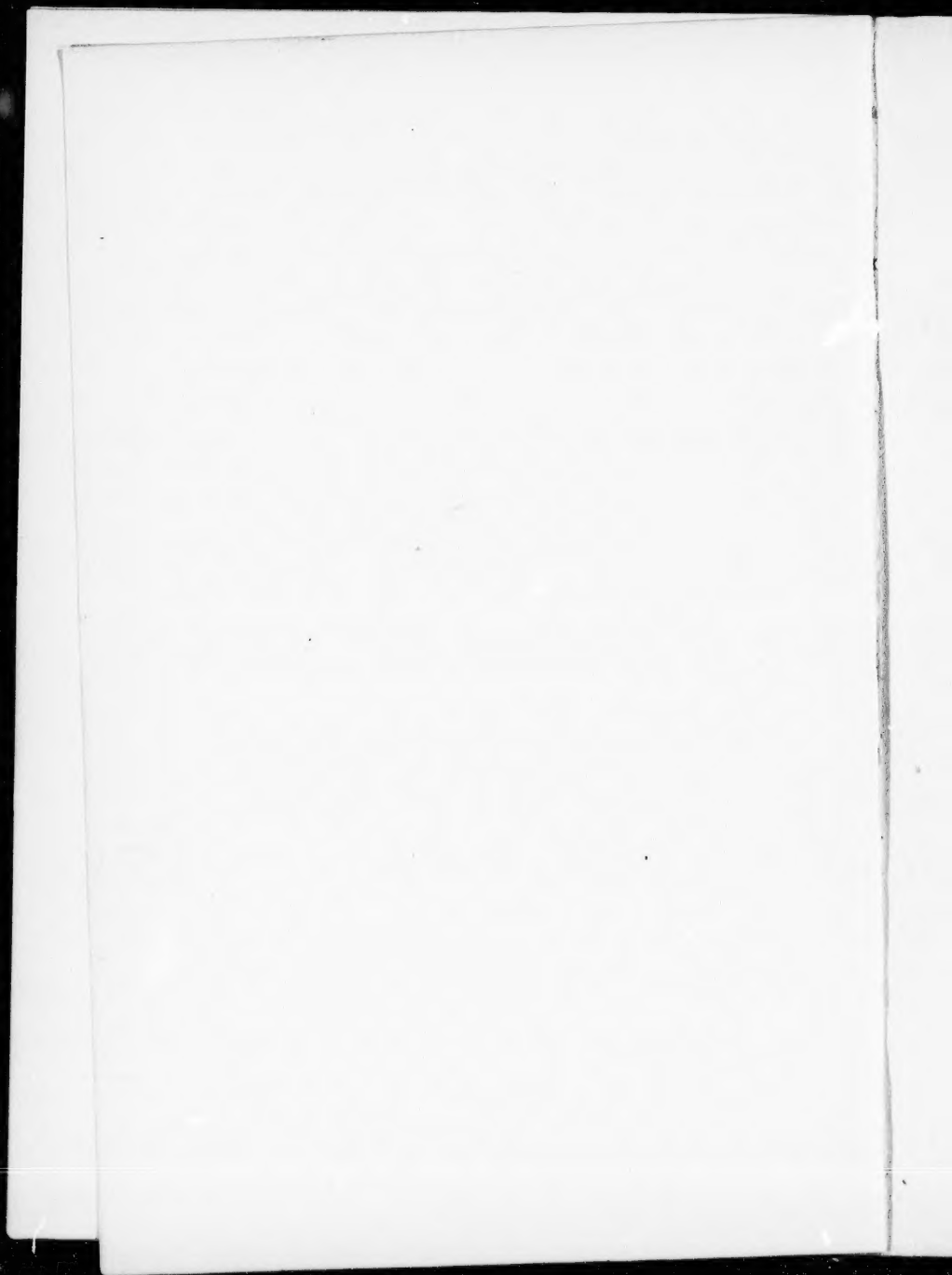
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THREE WEDDING RINGS.

BY

MRS. ANNIE GREGG SAVIGNY,

AUTHOR OF "A HEART SONG OF TO-DAY," "A ROMANCE OF TORONTO," ETC.

"The sacred love o' weel-placed love,
Luxuriantly indulge it,
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Though naething should divulge it."

"Endurance is the crowning quality,
And patience all the passion of great hearts."

—LOWELL.

Toronto:

ROSE PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1892.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

COUNT TOLSTOI declares that the majority of people read novels only for the story, caring not a jot for the moral.

[At this I see the critic eyebrow uplift, for he, the critic, sees nothing of the moral in Tolstoi, while I maintain that a man with so good a wife as the Russian novelist's has a something of the moral about him, at all events.]

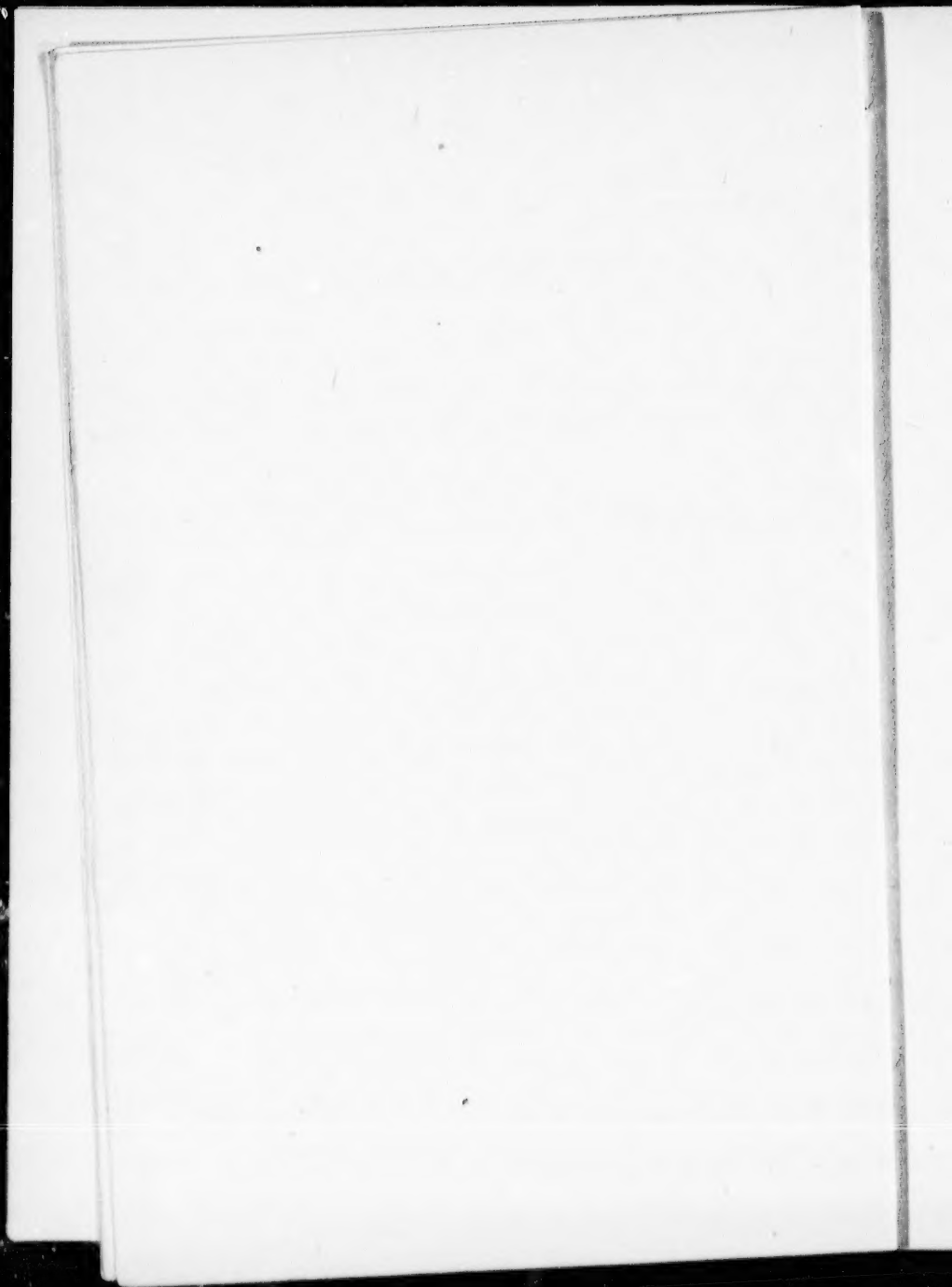
Be this as it may, in my experience among my small family of books I have met individuals who have asked me for the moral, and so to their ears I would say :

Let us train up our bright Canadian and American girls to walk alone, and not merely to find a jewelled prop, in home or foreign matrimonial marts, possibly to find it a broken reed in their own aimless hands.

Let us make them self-reliant, in the sure possession of some well developed talent, or in possession of a hand of skilled labor, so that when marriage *comes to them* it will be neither the "mirage" of *Ouida*, nor yet the "failure" of *Mona Caird*, but a companionable union of the best of friends.

Yours faithfully,

THE AUTHOR.



CONTENTS.

PRELUDE TO CHAPTER I.		
INTRODUCING "A VERY GENTLE, PERFECT KNIGHT" OF THE OTTAWA CIVIL SERVICE, - - -	PAGE	9
CHAPTER I.		
AND SHE THOUGHT HIS ATTENTIONS WERE FATHERLY, -		13
CHAPTER II.		
THROUGH THE CURTAINED DOOR SHE CAME, - -		19
CHAPTER III.		
AT VETERAN LODGE, SANDY HILL, OTTAWA, - -		27
CHAPTER IV.		
A RAZZLE DAZZLE TIME, - - - -		35
CHAPTER V.		
BETSY KNEELS AT THE OAKEN CHAIR, - - -		46
CHAPTER VI.		
BEAUTIFUL COUNTY OF PRINCE EDWARD, - - -		58
CHAPTER VII.		
TRIFLING, TEASING, TRUSTING, TRYSTING, - - -		71
CHAPTER VIII.		
A GOLDEN JULY MAIDEN, - - - -		82

CHAPTER IX.		PAGE
THE OLD, OLD STORY, - - - - -		92
CHAPTER X.		
RIGHT DOWN DOVEY, DOVEY, - - - - -		104
CHAPTER XI.		
A BIRD OF ILL-OMEN, - - - - -		114
CHAPTER XII.		
THE MASTER OF BROADACRES AT HOME, - - - - -		125
CHAPTER XIII.		
AMID THE SPIRES, A GIRL-FACE, - - - - -		132
CHAPTER XIV.		
"THUS FAR SHALT THOU GO AND NO FARTHER," - - - - -		135
CHAPTER XV.		
FROM HANLAN ISLAND TO BROADACRES, - - - - -		141
CHAPTER XVI.		
"HONOR WITHERS, LOCKS OPEN, BARRIERS FALL," - - - - -		147
CHAPTER XVII.		
A PRELUDE TO MATRIMONY, - - - - -		155
CHAPTER XVIII.		
NELL AND RICE AT THE MATRIMONIAL ALTAR, - - - - -		163
CHAPTER XIX.		
AT NEPEAN POINT, OTTAWA, - - - - -		168
CHAPTER XX.		
A SALAAM, A SQUEEZE, A CRUSH, A JAM, A SALAAM, - - - - -		178

Contents.

vii

CHAPTER XXI.

PAGE	MINISTER OF FINANCE, PRO TEM., - - -	PAGE	191
------	--------------------------------------	------	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

104	THE GAY OLD BOY LOOKS AFTER HIS INTERESTS, - -	195
-----	--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

114	PATRICK LEARY BOWLED OUT, - - -	210
-----	---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

125	HAZEL LOST IN TROUBLE'S HAZE, - - -	216
-----	-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

132	ANOTHER EDEN, LAKE HOPATCONG, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A.,	227
-----	---	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

135	WHEN GOLD SPEAKS, THE WORLD LISTENS, - -	234
-----	--	-----

CHAPTER XXVII.

141	LENTEN TEARS BREAK TO EASTER SMILES, - - -	240
-----	--	-----

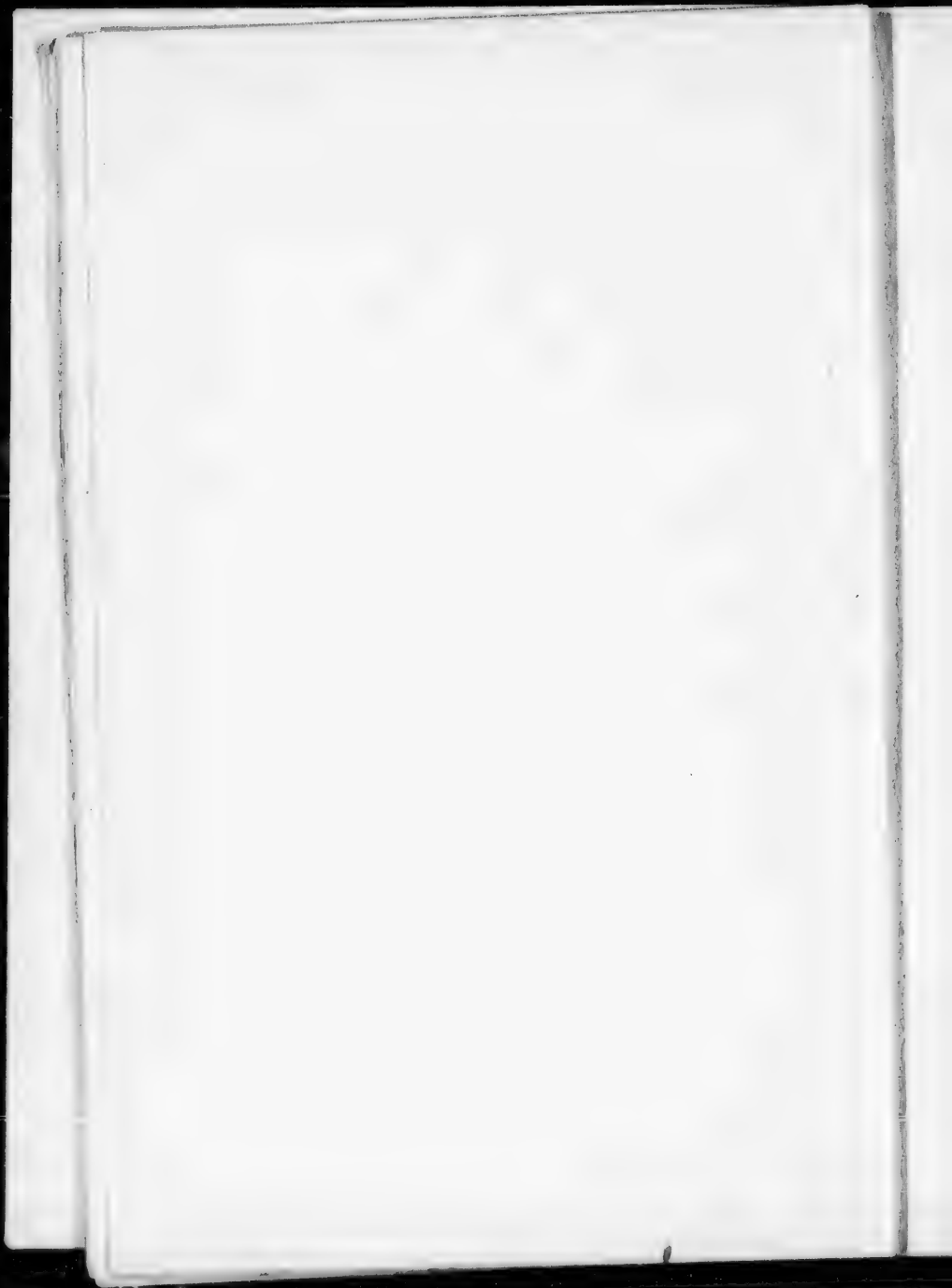
147

155

163

168

178



THREE WEDDING RINGS.



PRELUDE TO CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCING:

“A VERY GENTLE, PERFECT KNIGHT” OF THE
OTTAWA CIVIL SERVICE.

FOUR o'clock on a golden summer day the arbor in the pine grove on the wooded lawn at Veteran Lodge, Sandyhill, Ottawa, is an invitingly cool retreat, and a realized dream of the loved son of the house, that handsome young athlete, noble, manly Roderick Gray.

The arbor is reached by stairs, some thirty steps, the rustic structure being supported on the trunks of some four or five pine trees, which posts are concealed by the rich green foliage and purple blossoms of the clematis, intertwined with the rainbow-hued glory of the morning, gone to sleep in the drowsy heat of the afternoon sun ; a fragrant bed of heliotrope completely fills the space between the posts, and mingles its perfume with the sweet scent of the pines.

Lazily ascending the stairs, and peeping into the arbor, a poem in repose greets the eye. Built as it is up amid the pine boughs, the only waking life one sees are diamond bars of sunlight dancing through the latticed walls, alive with gleaming dust in a mad waltz, shadowed at intervals by sleepy movements of great arms of the pines surrounding the arbor. The

strings of an autoharp lying on an open sheet of music vibrate not the sweet notes of Mary Gunn's song, "Cam ye by Athol"; the chords of the Æolian harp in the north wall are in repose.

In a roomy, many-cushioned, rustic chair sits asleep that manly, honor-loving gentleman, the revered master of Veteran Lodge, and the upright civil servant in the militia department, Colonel Gray.

A tall, soldierly figure, muscular enough for a hero of Charles Reade's novels, a life of noble deeds showing in the strongly marked lines of the somewhat worn face; a look of command is there also, being his birth-right as of the ruling classes, as well as of a leader of men on the field of war as also in councils of peace. One can see that a happy anticipation has been the prelude to his sleep, for he smiles; and so it has, for his only son, Roderick, returns to Ottawa ere the glow of the setting sun merges into the sweet cool of the gloaming. Under the closed eyelids are orbs of Highland blackness which glow with fire as he talks with Roderick, or become tender in converse with his loved daughter, so like her dead mother. The sunlight diamonds through the lattice flash now on his close-cut grey hair, playing lovingly over his face, short military whiskers and moustache, touching the muscular hands lying idly on the chair-arms. Two favorite dogs, a handsome setter and a brown retriever, are asleep at his feet, while his almost constant companion, his daughter, Mary Gunn, sits still as a statue, in a half dreamy state, her head thrown sleepily backward among the soft, billowy cushions of the settee. Of active, high-strung temperament and habits, no adipose tissue shows in her tall, lithe form; of excitable, fervid imagination, she is a compound of pleasing variety, and withal of a tender, loving nature, with the firm conviction that the world holds none to compare with her honored father, loved brother, and boy son; her hair in a high coil at back, and short bang, showing a broad, full forehead, has a touch of red in its darkness, with more than one gray strand which is silvered as the red is bronzed in the moving bars of sunlight. To the dark of her eyes, as sleepily she lifts the lids to look tenderly at her unconscious father, the sunlight playfully lends a yellow gleam. Her cool muslin gown is of pale neutral tint, patterned in sprays of purple heather; on her lap and about the rug at her

daintily slipped feet are several new journals which she had been reading to her father ere he slept. A restless movement coming to her supple fingers causes the papers to rustle, rousing her dreamy consciousness, but she presses her flexible lips together to repress in this temple of Somnus her quickened pulsations of delight on the home-bound steps of her brother Roderick; but her father is awake, and, soldier-like, upright on his feet. His tall form again momentarily stoops to pick up the newspapers, as he says in cultured tones, with a scarce perceptible Scotch accent, and with old-time politeness:

"Pardon me, my daughter, for sleeping in your presence, but," he adds smiling, "the whiff o' Canadian heather from heliotrope and pines, with your soothing tones, and the trickle of the water spray amid the trees, have been a healthful opiate. I feel young again after my nap, and can greet my boy with fitting vigor."

"That you will, father, and our dear Roderick will be so glad to find us in our highlands to welcome him, and as I see Donald McLean in the distance—we dine him this evening, you remember—you will have his company while I take a run on my wheel over to Metcalf-street. I long for another chat with Hazel, ere she leaves the city for her summer outing; and Nell Carew will be only on view for this evening; she must be a little beauty, if the miniature Hazel lent us does not flatter her. I shall be only able to have one glimpse of her, and then my wheel will bring me here quicker than Roderick can come from the dépôt, so I shall be back in time to welcome him and change my gown for dinner. But, oh! How deliciously, delightfully romantic those two, our Roderick and witching Nell Carew will be on the train all the way from Toronto together!"

"You forget, daughter that the winsome lassie is the *fiancee* of a Toronto banker; but away, the sooner you depart, the sooner you will be with your old father again, and Donald and I will drive to the depot and meet Roderick."

"Happy thought! and one I was going to suggest, but, father, before I leave you, tell me, dear, have you been able to influence the head of Mr. Leary's department, in the still retaining his services, notwithstanding his deplorable habits?"

"Yes, Mary, just as I was leaving the West block, I met DeVesey, Leary's chief, you know, and we walked from the — Buildings together. He consents for Hazel's sake, whom all Ottawa loves and reveres, to give him another year's trial, but he is to be warned."

"Oh, father, how thankful I am," and her hands are clasped fervently, "how I wish Patrick Leary were 'a very gentle, perfect knight,' such as Scotch Donald, as you, my father, or as our noble Roderick. What a pity the 'service' were not all men of your type," she says, proudly.

"You flatter me, my daughter, but have been lending an ear to rumor. The pages of the 'service' are somewhat like an author's book, on the blemishes of each the full glare of the noonday sun is turned, while with a dark lantern the many 'very gentle, perfect knights' are blotted out."

"Spoken like my father; your gentleness ever curbs my impetuosity; nevertheless, I hope I shall not meet that body of superior ponderosity—as Hazel calls Monsieur Beauvais—at Metcalf-street!" and kissing him on the brow, she descends the steps from the arbor.

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CHAPTER I.

AND SHE THOUGHT HIS ATTENTIONS WERE FATHERLY !

A parrot laughs ! A woman sighs !

NELL CAREW ! Nell Carew, behave thyself !” said a sweet-faced woman, seated in a low rocker in the prettiest drawing-room in all Ottawa.

“Hazel Leary, I cannot !”

“I believe you, for you seem possessed.”

“You’ve hit the mark now, Hazel,” says the little blonde beauty, half witch, half fairy, “and so has this child,” as a scream of laughter from a parrot, perched on the dainty toe of the latter, salutes a shower of poppy leaves, thrown by her small, firm hand. “Yes, I am possessed,” she continues, daintily, as she dances Poll up and down on her foot. “I am possessed of a love for purple and fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day, and not only when my *fiancee*, Hamlet Rice, dines at Broadacres, North Toronto, so there is my answer to the question in those large cat-green orbs of yours, as to why I have sold my blonde person to the highest bidder in the mart matrimonial,” and with a dive at a Maltese cat in sleepy content on a divan, in a trice it is whisked by the tail over her shoulder, to descend on the fawn-colored coat of an Irish setter, when with indignant back and quivering tail, it fled.

“It is horrible !” said Hazel Leary, looking from her babe in her pretty arms.

“If it refers to the demoralized condition of the cat’s tail as it fled, I am at one with you, but if to my love of faring sumptuously every day, then am I *en lance*, and by those hot-house grapes in the somewhat fat paw of your dear old Beauvais, as behold him saunter to the door, and which I feel by an inward craving—as I always do for forbidden fruit—are for your own rather passable mouth, but which I shall wheedle him out of. By all this and more, I shall say you are excess-

sively mean, for as I have written you, uncle refused to give me any more dear dirty dollar bills if I said no to H.R. I have had to say yes to this game of barter, for I can't," with a stamp of the pretty foot, "I can't live without a more than occasional gown, built by Felix or Redfern, fancies from Tiffany or Ellis, and palate ticklers from Webb, and now for your grapes, tra la, tra la!"

Mrs. Leary smiles indulgently at the wild spirits of our pretty Nell, from whom until a few hours ago she has been separated by long lengths of miles and long lengths of months.

Here Monsieur Beauvais, a civil servant from the — Buildings, enters, *debonair* and unannounced, the neat maid servant evidently deeming it unnecessary, for the gay old boy, as the friend of her master, Mr. Leary, comes and goes at all hours. A rather handsome man is M. Beauvais, though self-indulgence is dominant in the heavy under jaw and large full lips; clean shaven, save for well-trimmed side-whiskers; well-dressed; well cared for; portly, but well-preserved; close-cropped grey hair; sixty, but looking fifty; of the Du Maurier type, fond of hanging around dancing attendance upon pretty married women. Hitherto, his *penchant* has been for those of extravagant tastes, who had not fought shy of plunging their jewelled fingers into the depths of his fat purse, which he had not seldom been lucky enough to recoup from the husband at the gaming-table. His latest passion is for the pretty mistress of the sweet-scented floral drawing-room on Metcalf-street into which he has just now smilingly entered.

He had gone on this afternoon to the dépôt, aware that Mrs. Leary would be there to meet Nell Carew, of Toronto, but being a few minutes late, had only seen them from the open carriage driving through Sparks-street for home, hence Nell's recognition of him as he had entered the gate and come up the walk through the lawn to the hall door.

But he stands bowing low before Mrs. Leary; a ripe old Bacchus, grapes in hand, his heavy eyes resting upon the sweet upturned face and white throat, showing between the high, open Medici collar of her soft, pink gown, when he turns, acknowledging the introduction to Miss Carew.

After a gallant bow to Nell, taking in her girlish slimmness and Murray-built gown of finest white embroidery, he seats

himself near his pretty hostess, playing with the clinging baby fingers, when, rising to put the grapes in a dish, Nell, with a mischievous glance, breaks in with :

"For my parrot, I know ; see how she is eyeing you. She just loves grapes, and will fly at you, spoiling your pretty whiskers, if I don't feed her quickly," and, taking the fruit, seemingly unconscious of his amused glances, pouring them into a Crown Derby bowl, she proceeds to feed herself—and the bird.

Beauvais laughed softly.

"There, I knew you would be pleased ; you are *so* generous. As we passed you on Sparks street as we drove home from the dépôt, Mrs. Leary endeavored to make me believe you are all the virtues rolled in one."

At this Beauvais was intensely amused, well aware that his relationship to the virtues is very far removed, indeed, but he says, good-humoredly, "Oh, I don't know."

"Now, don't disclaim," cries Nell, archly, tossing back her golden bang, somewhat rebellious after the long journey from Toronto. "Bother my travelled bang," she says, impatiently.

"I am glad Mrs. Leary has been trying to make you think well of me," he says, in his deep, unctuous, not displeasing tones, and with the interest one usually takes in—self, "and I hope you will come to believe that I am not such a bad fellow after all."

"Yes, I daresay you are only half bad," she replies slowly, and, as if reading him, "that half you get from your progenitor, Adam, who was right down bad."

"How about Mother Eve?" he says, laughingly. "Most mortals pitch into her ; she was two hundred feet in height, so a French scientist and the wandering Arab have it, and in that case has back enough to shoulder all the mud you throw."

"I shan't throw any, poor dear, and I don't believe that Arab with the wandering mind. Milton, too, was blind, indeed, not to see that she wasn't a bit to blame for plucking that old apple. What with Satan, in the form of a toad, squatting at her ear by night—just what one might expect from tenting—and the old Adam bothering her all day, she had to oblige them, poor darling."

"And then," said Beauvais, in amused jest, "the darling gave Adam the core, which has stuck in his throat ever since."

"Served you men right," she cries, whisking off to the piano, when under cover of snatches from the waltz "Lotus Eaters," the gay old boy thinking, "dash the little witch, she is too full of self, to be anything but in the way," endeavors to hold the attention of the sweet-faced woman, so near him as he tells her of her husband's day at the—Buildings.

■ "Has he taken much to-day?" she asks meaningly.

"No; that is, not for him, let me see, he had a bottle of ale at Belier's, on his way to the department," [he does not confide that he himself had treated him,] "then he lunched at the Russell, if you would only not worry," and his hand brushes hers in on his, part an intentional caress, as she smooths baby's frock, while he goes on to say, "some women would give him his head."

"Oh, Mr. Beauvais, but you surely don't suggest anything so horrible to me!"

"You know me too well for that," he says reproachfully.

"True, how unkind of me, such a course of conduct on the part of a wife, would shock you, as much as it would myself, pray, forgive me," and her large grey eyes turn from baby's face to his own.

For reply he presses her hand feverishly and she, pure, sweet, and honest, thinks his attentions are—fatherly!

Here our pretty Nell, dashing the cup of a blissful sensation from his lips, twirling around on the piano stool and facing them, said:

"Hazel! what a long time Pat is, in coming home. I want to instruct him in the care of Poll, while we go summering to the sandbanks. He will take good care of her, won't he, is clear?"

"Yes," answers Hazel, doubtfully, "but as he is necessarily away from home so much, and not—well at—times, I advise you to leave her in the careful hands of my housemaid, Amarith."

"No! no! I shall leave her with Pat, she's such jolly company. I wonder if I shall know Pat; just fancy, *ma seur*, I only met him once, when you became possessor of that eighteen carat fine hoop."

"Yes, I remember dear, and it does seem strange that you have not met Pat since, but we can truthfully father the blame of all that upon uncle Carew, whose dislike of me causes him to so unkindly keep us apart."

"Yes, Hazel, it's uncle's fault, and he would not have allowed me to come to you now, but that I said yes, to H. R.," and she makes a moue of dislike. "Yes, uncle Carew, has a good deal of the old Adam within him. But what about Pat, has he been kept in to-day, Mr. Beauvais? I dare say, there are a good many naughty boys in the service, but the Ministers, are, of course, above reproach, and I dare say, are this very minute, reading sermons to poor Pat."

"Or, possibly," laughs Beauvais, "granting absolution!"

"Fie! Fie!" says Hazel, smiling in spite of herself.

Scarcely had the laugh subsided when Mr. Leary entered, moving at once with rather a shuffling gait in Nell's direction, when, by slightly stooping—she is but five feet five—his thin, dissipated face brushes hers in a kiss, when involuntarily she passes her dainty pocket-handkerchief over her pretty mouth, as she looks at him curiously, for this man with the complexion that pleases not, and breath that defies, is the husband of sweet Hazel, at whose shaky condition, Nell hears, rather than sees, her leave a sigh.

"No you don't, my pretty sister," he drawled, laughingly; "I see you are up to hypnotising a fellow with those dazzling orbs of yours," and the parrot taking up the refrain of his laughter, moving over to her cage, he cries:

"Hello! you Poll parrot, hello!"

"Hello!" shrieks the bird.

"Well done! poke her up, Nell, what can she say?"

"Oh, almost anything," replies Nell, again dancing the bird on her fetching kid slipper; "go on, Poll, tell us what you can say."

"Oh, almost anything," it cried, as intell'ibly and truthfully as many a christian.

"Hear how she chuckles," laughs Hazel, which Nell, no doubt, is doing inwardly; "I was told the other day by an Englishman that he had had a parrot which had sung divinely and with so accurate an ear that if by chance she made a mistake she would revert to the bar—though still on her perch—and correct herself."

"She was a blue ribbon parrot," says Nell, with latent mirth, "had it been a male bird it would have stayed at the bar and never have corrected itself."

Beauvais and the parrot laugh a duet while Leary, throwing himself on to the cushions of the divan in front of Nell, and, lighting a cigarette, drawls :

"And so you are going to give Haze and I a gilt-edged brother-in-law ?"

"Yes," she answers slowly, again eyeing him curiously, for Hazel's husband, with the odour of Stirling's brewery strong upon him, is a new revelation to her ; "yes, Patrick, so I'm told, and I have very tangible reasons for not doubting it."

"Tangible, eh !" he says, teasingly ; "spooning, eh ! now you're caught, spoons are tangible when on the lips, you give yourself away, my pretty sister."

"How smart we are," she says, saucily, "my spoons are tangible, being of gold, which controls the mart—matrimonial," and she pelts anew the parrot with red leaves of the poppies on her bodice, her beautiful little face remaining cold and passionless.

Beauvais, leaning over baby, says in low tones to Hazel : "She does not love this man she is to marry, she hates his caresses : wait until she meets a lover, then, yes, then, she will come to know that ——" and he breaks off suddenly.

With a vivid blush, Hazel Leary replies confusedly, under cover of a duet of laughter from Nell and Leary with the parrot :

"Though I scarcely understand you, your words distress me and make me fear for Nell."

"You must know I would not distress you for worlds, but one must see your sister is a passionate little creature, ready to laugh or cry, hug or hate. I would not care to be in the shoes of Rice when she meets the man who will breathe life into that rebellious little heart of hers."

"Oh, I hope and pray she may never meet any one afterwards," she says, in earnest repressed tones, her sweet face dangerously near his as she bends over baby.

"If the thought bring you a moment's uneasiness, I hope she may never know the joy, or sweet pain of 'some human heart beating all in tune to her own.'"

And but for Hazel's own pure soul, own singleness of heart, she would have felt the love of Beauvais in his impassioned tones. Any man, and many women, would have read it in his eyes; but Leary's whole attention is absorbed by our pretty Nell, as she tosses Poll from one small hand to the other, laughing merrily at its ruffled feelings, showing in its ruffled plumage, on the touching advances of Leary.

"I see you are troubled for Nell's future happiness, Mr. Beauvais," says Hazel softly, "but I am going to hope for the best, and so must you."

"I am, I fear, thinking most of any uneasiness that may come to you in this marriage; you have more than enough to bear already, through him," with a side glance in the direction of her husband.

"Yes, indeed! poor Patrick," and a troubled look comes to her grey eyes. "What would I do, without your care for him, and sympathy with myself; if my own dear father were alive, he could not be more helpful."

At this he winces, fatherly indeed! but he is vindictive, and will give her pain for pain.

"I don't think I told you who your husband lunched to-day, at the 'Russell' with."

"No," she answers with nervous haste, "may I know?"

"Certainly, it was with—Miss Belleville!"

CHAPTER II.

THROUGH THE CURTAINED DOOR SHE CAME.

"Her face is sweet and *debonair*,
You would not call it dark, or fair;
Sweet face, dark eyes, and light brown hair."

HAZEL," said Nell softly, from behind the silken window hangings; "Hazel! a bright faced woman, gowned in navy blue, and on a tricycle, is staying her wheel at your gate, and looking as unconcerned as if she didn't

care a continental, though two gentlemen in passing lift their hats as if it were a pleasure to cool their heated brows in her honor."

"It is Mrs. Gunn," said Beauvais rising, "and the man this side, with the fox terriers at his heels, is McLean; what an idler that fellow has become since he fell on his feet on the Quirk estate!" and watching his pretty hostess in a peculiar way as he speaks. She is mortified at feeling an unmeaning warmth come to her cheek, and is relieved on the maid announcing "Mrs. Gunn," who says in cheery tones:

"Well, here I am, Hazel, dear, back from the Sandbanks, and come to carry yourself and Miss Carew—and you, gentlemen, of course, off to Veteran Lodge. Now, don't look alarmed, dear—not on my wheel; you will come, all of you, and I shall do some word-painting on the Sandbanks—be a sort of guide book for future use; serving a selfish end, inasmuch as you must think of me as you will lean on the memory of my words. Come, say yes. Colonel Gray, my father, is so disappointed that my brother Roderick will not be with us until to-morrow evening that he forbade me to return to Sandy Hill without you."

"But, Mary, dear——"

"But me no buts, Hazel, even though you do leave town to-morrow morning, you must dine to-night," and though inwardly wishing both Beauvais and Leary a thousand miles away, so she could have her friend Hazel to herself, and learn to know our pretty Nell, whom she has already fallen in love with, and is angry with fate for delaying her brother's home-bound steps, as he will not now meet this winsome lassie with the golden tresses and een sue like the violets, but to the conventionalities, and so she continues, though with latent doubt:

"You can have made no engagement for this evening, Mr. Leary—the last you will see of your wife and boy for a month—so I am sure of no opposition from your lordship."

"No," he says, waveringly, lending an ear to Lucifer, "excepting that some of the fellows who are coming with me to Kettle Island expect me at the Club to-night, to make final arrangements. But I can leave Veteran Lodge early. I feel sure Colonel Gray will excuse me."

"Oh, yes," she answers, in a brisk, somewhat relieved manner, though feeling for Hazel's sake a bit conscience-stricken, on the soft voice of her friend breaking in with—

"But, Pat, I would so much like you to be with us all evening. Could you not put those men off until, say, luncheon hour tomorrow, as you don't leave for Kettle Island until Saturday, and I want you to see Nell and I home to-night."

"No, hang me if I can, Haze! They made no end of a row because I would not dine at the Club to-night."

"Men's clubs are decidedly blocks in women's way," said Mrs. Gunn, with a quiet smile, "but as for escort, Hazel dear, I am in a position to provide you with one who is mail proof against flirting—who forgot to offer even his arm, much less his heart, to me the last time I was his escort. I refer to our Scotch friend, Donald McLean, who had promised himself a delightful reunion with Roderick; so we disappointed trio will be but poor company without your company to bridge time. So say yes—and you, too, Mr. Beauvais, and now for my wheel, which I can indulge in, as you are indulgent to this my newest love, and as we are absolutely, I do believe, the only people left in town. Seven o'clock, you remember;" and with a hurried kiss to baby, and a graceful courtesy taking in the others, she hastens away to avoid meeting a lady who is entering, in her rather unconventional haste escaping a black frown on the brow of Beauvais, which had settled there on the mention of Donald McLean.

"How do, again, Adele?" Leary said lazily, as his wife, giving Miss Belleville her hand in passing and excusing herself, had gone with Mrs. Gunn to the gate, followed by Nell Carew—who, with the free masonry among women of a kind, desired to avoid an introduction to a woman to whom her sister had only shown the civility of hostess, and whom her sister's friend, Mrs. Gunn, had plainly shown a wish to escape from.

"Snuffed you out completely, Adele!" Beauvais said, with venom in his tone, glad to know that he could lash Mrs. Gunn through another's tongue, and so ease the jealous rage he invariably feels when Mrs. Leary has the prospect of meeting Donald McLean—mad that Mrs. Gunn should dare to name him as escort to the woman he himself had a passion for.

But he will see to it that none other than himself shall be her escort in the sweet summer night stroll from Veteran Lodge, Sandy Hill, on this the eve of her departure. Yes, he will let Leary and cards alone for to-night.

"You are grumpy yourself, Beau. I see it in your murderous eye. Spoiled your *tête-à-tête*, eh?" she says, meaningly, surveying her large, rather fine person in a pier-glass, taking off her large black lace hat, with its garden of yellow roses, arranging her strawberry bang, when, wheeling around, she fixes Leary with her rather bold blue eyes, as she says, quickly:

"What brought the little Gunn here to day, eh? To spy out the nakedness of the land—see if I was here, and if there was anything nice and naughty going on, so that she could report to the Veteran at the Lodge, or any of the Four Hundred who may be simmering in town in the pot of a short income, and fanning themselves with the waves of discontent that they are not as jolly as we are—eh, Paddy?"

"Yes, that's about the size of it," he answered, lazily puffing the smoke of his cigarette into the meditative face of the Maltese cat.

"But not the whole, fair Adele," said Beauvais, changing his seat to command a view of the gate and of the shapely head of Mrs. Leary, her wealth of light brown hair and lovely profile. "No, not the whole, by half; for she gave Leary a gratis—save for the gratitude which glowed in his attentive face—a gratis lecture on the duty of husbands to their wives on the eve of the departure of the latter, which sermonizing was a sort of serious burst after a peremptory bid to dine at Veteran Lodge on this evening. But the way in which she ignored your fair person and fled at the sight of your black and yellow head-gear showing over the gate imbues one with the suspicion that she had an idea of Satan's livery."

"How about your necktie, Beau? Stripes of yellow and black in sinuous coils abound. Yes, 'twas your serpentine flavor that proved too much for her; but, mark you, I shall be even with yonder piece of prudery in navy blue before next season is over. I shall grace Veteran Lodge with my presence, chaperoned by Mrs. Leary. What say you to that, Paddy?"

"That you'll do it if you say so," he said, sleepily, "but I don't envy you, though. You'll meet some of the biggest guns in the service."

"Not so fast, Leary," said Beauvais, "I bet ten to five Adele will never wear that feather in her cap, nor the Greys up their nose."

Swift as was the return of Hazel she found her husband fast asleep on the divan, his legs stretched out comfortably. A pretty picture she made coming in softly, not to awaken him; through the curtained doorway she came, pink-gowned in palest tint, the soft summer fabric enveloping her slight, though perfect form in graceful folds, the deep red of the roses on her bodice lending dusky shadows and witching lights to her dark eyes.

Making a point to be ever courteous to her husband's friends, no matter how antagonistic, nay, hateful their characters might be to her own pure and gentle nature, going to Miss Belleville's side, who, with suppressed laughter, had been listening to Beauvais' recital of a scene in one of the corridors of the East Block, in which a mother had beaten one of the clerks in the service with her umbrella for breaking the tenth commandment in uplifting the unholy eyes of covetousness towards her pretty daughter, when, lo! a transformation scene in the matter of expression in the face of the narrator on the advent of Mrs. Leary, an angelic smile chasing the wicked gleam from the heavy eyes of Beauvais, as the musical voice of Mrs. Leary broke in with, "I trust you will pardon my running away so unceremoniously. Miss Belleville, may I give you a cup of tea?"

"Thank you; Amaranth has just made me one exactly to my liking; I am quite ready for another, though, if you brew it strong and add a squeeze of lemon. The young lady in virgin white, who vanished, heaven knows where, is your sister from Toronto, I presume?"

"Yes, and begged to be excused. We dine at Veteran Lodge this evening, and prior to our going she desired to give some instruction to the maid as to Poll's pet dishes."

"So this saucy, chuckling bird is your sister's; were I a bride-elect I should make short work of the screaming creature, but I am partial to a quiet *tête-à-tête*. Paddy tells me she is

going to get into the ring of matrimony very soon. I suppose you will be off to Toronto, the city of altars."

"Marriages are very uncertain affairs," she replied, evasively, not willing to discuss her sister's personals with Miss Belleville; "but if her's even does come off, I am not certain whether I can arrange to leave."

The fact was her uncle was so strange she did not feel sure he would think it necessary she should go, having Nell with her at the present.

"Can't arrange to leave?" cried Miss Belleville, sneeringly. "How is that? I dare say Mr. Leary could leave the Department for a day: but even if not, you would feel freer to stay longer were he not with you, and as for him, he will be more than comfortable in his old quarters at the 'Russell,' I suppose, or perhaps you know he is coming there on your leaving for the Sandbanks?"

"Oh, is he? I am so sorry. I thought I had persuaded him to keep house here, at home," said Hazel, hastily and in distressed tones. "My cook is such a treasure and Amaranth is more, so he would be quite comfortable. Mr. Beauvais, do please, use your influence, you promised to stay with him, and it would be so much better for Pat."

"Better for him, how is that?" cried Miss Belleville, hastily, an angry spot coming to her cheek.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Leary, but the 'Russell' was no bad stepmother to him previous to your playing the mentor in becoming his wife."

Hazel felt the hatred of the other in her hissing words. Until this moment in her year of married life Miss Belleville had worn the mask of a polite indifference towards Mrs. Leary, which now, on seeing the effect of her outburst of jealousy in Hazel's wondering eyes, trembling lip, and pale cheek, she again quickly assumed continuing, with apparent carelessness as she sipped her tea, "joking apart, Mrs. Leary, don't you think it is only fair when a man's wife seeks pastures new, that her husband may, without asking her permission, regulate himself in pastures old—this time—the 'Russell House?'"

"But I am not seeking my own individual pleasure in this summer jaunt. Dr. Wright says positively that I *must* take baby away if I wish to see the poor wee pet thrive," she said,

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brokenly, adding with gentle dignity, "and with reference to Mr. Leary, I am thinking only of his good, in my desire that he should keep house rather than take up his old quarters at the 'Russell.'"

"But I dare say you are not aware, Mrs. Leary, that men hate to be dictated to as to what is best for them—married men especially—hating to have their wings clipped." She said, malevolently, aware of the disgust Beauvais had invariably evinced for leading-strings, and wishing to raise his ire.

But listening to this war of words under cover of the *Evening Journal* of which he has not read one word, but had taken instead a strange delight in watching Hazel on her defence—so to speak—and to a woman only fit—morally speaking—to clean her shoes, it seemed to bring her down and nearer to himself, and how sweet she looked as his eyes devoured her, though stealthily. Behind her stood a wealth of graceful young maples and palms completely hiding the winter grate and the whole front of the mantel, the mantel shelf banked with sweet peas and mignonette in richest bloom, a pretty idea of her own to remove the artificial in the world of bric-a-brac, giving place in the sweet summer time to the floral offerings of dame nature.

Yes, fair enough to hold the gaze of any man, even with the troubled look she wore as the hour drew near, when, for the child's sake, she must leave her weak husband to the influence of Miss Belleville.

Here Beauvais interposed after a way he had in Leary's affairs. Just now he feels he must have her look at him, yea, and lean on him, as he loved to feel she was obliged to do at times.

"You press Mrs. Leary too hard, Miss Belleville. The questions you put are too abstruse with the mercury at ninety in the shade. Permit me to telephone for a carriage for you, Mrs. Leary," he said, going towards the servants' hall, "You must not walk to Sandy Hill in this heat."

"Thank you, you are always thoughtful; ask them to come at once, as we shall drive slowly to give Nell an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the city, and with two seats, please, Mr. Beauvais, as I shall not go without baby and his maid."

A good social engineer when he had a goal to reach, the gay old boy was now in his element in numberless little attentions

to Nell and his pretty hostess, holding baby tenderly while the maid seated herself, kissing the infant mouth—a miniature copy of its sweet young mother's.

"*Au revoir*," he said, smiling at a sudden thought that if he stood there her husband how deliriously content he would be, "only *au revoir*, for I shall wake Leary at once, make him dress, get into my evening coat as we pass the 'Russell,' and be with you in half an hour."

And, with his heavy eyes glistening, he almost mechanically entered by the gate, found himself up the walk, and up and on to the piazza without knowing it, when he was confronted by Miss Belleville, who said, a little irritably:

"Don't go in, the maid is there and I want a word with you; yes, it's all right, I woke him when that sneak Amarinth was off duty and coaxed him up stairs, where I have just left him getting out of his comfortable flannels and into his slavish dress coat."

"Then you think it will be all right, that he will come down clothed and in his right mind, so to speak, Jove!" he said, starting to his feet, "the spirits, in the cupboard in the lounge!"

"I am not a fool; here is the key of the room, he is all right for the rest of the evening. Poor Paddy, his life is too heavy, but I must not waste time, I want you to manage that; I see him oftener, I brighten him and she——"

"Here he is—no, it's Poll chuckling, I forgot the bird. I don't see how I can—Mrs. Leary——"

"Yes, Mrs. Leary, Mrs. Leary" she mimicked angrily, "listen to me," and when in ten minutes Mr. Leary appeared, a look of ennui on his small, dissipated face, he found them talking quickly, their faces wearing the fire of a heated discussion.

CHAPTER III.

AT VETERAN LODGE, SANDY HILL, OTTAWA.

"And though red lips, sweet face nor light brown hair
I dare not touch—I love her—so."

As the carriage rolled down Metcalf-st., Hazel could not but notice the unusual quietude of Nell, and the furtive glances at herself from the questioning violet eyes, correctly divining the cause to be that until to-day that inner court of her and her husband's wedded life had been a sealed book to Nell. Knowing also there would be no opportunity to relieve the anxiety of her sister while the maid all ears and tongue sat facing them, with a sudden change of programme she ordered the driver to enter the square and drive all around the carriage road, hence distracting Nell's thoughts by giving her a view of the Parliament and Departmental Buildings; the picturesque and imposing group of Gothic architecture would, she felt sure, be sufficient to magnetise Nell's thoughts to themselves. Her forethought was rewarded by seeing the cloud pass from the beautiful little face, while a whole-souled delight filled it as she gazed; and though Nell is by no means a poet, loving the good things of life too well to be anything so unpractical, valuing more the distilled odor of the rose rather than its living perfume, unless as now, when accentuating the beauty of Hazel, for she loves her only sister, yet is her admiration compelled by the loveliness of the gorgeous flower beds, which lend so great a charm to the noble plateau on which stand the buildings.

"I want other eyes, Hazel, mine are not big enough to take it all in, the Legislative Building is enough for one gaze, it is so grandly noble in detail, big enough, too, to omit nothing so small as a law constraining I, Nell Carew, to pay nearly sixty cents duty on my pair of corsets from the other side."

"See, Nell," laughed Hazel "those are the Speaker's Towers which, in frowning reproof for your levity, bid you know that

the honorable members desire to shut out mail-proof garments for women."

"I believe you, Hazel," she replied dryly, "though there is no *double entendre* in your words."

"Nell Carew, for shame!"

"Mrs. Leary, for shame, for 'twas you, who said anything naughty. See here, Hazel, but for uncle Philip and his iron-clad commands we would not go on to the Sandbanks until day after to-morrow. We have, or rather this child has, no time to see anything, and I feel sure one would have a decidedly more comprehensive view of the buildings from one of those Wellington-st. windows; the east and west blocks want to crowd into my retina all in a bunch, which makes them small. From one of those high windows opposite one could grasp the whole grand, though broken outline, from the proud towers, colored slate roofs, perforated by those doll windows, dormers I suppose, with all that delicate iron workmanship on top; ugh! they make me tired, I want to come another day to see what it is I have seen; I want step-ladders for my eyes. What a vacuum there must have been in the public treasury when all those buildings grew up. I am glad I escaped being a poor man with twelve children to board and taxes to pay; just about that time I'd rather be Nell Carew, and have come in now, only that I have to marry a man I don't care a continental for," she said in a low tone. "Oh yes, I can see in those cat-green orbs of yours that you are conventionally shocked at my aptitude for slang, but blame it to heredity, it's the shortest way, even though papa and mamma did talk old-fashioned English. But about H. R., he is a dandy, I don't mean a dude, though he is one, with his perpetual tailor-made look; but what I mean is, he isn't nice," she said, making a moue.

"But, Nell, dear, some one says a nice man is a man with nasty ways, so we will hope this is in his favor," and bidding the driver stay his steeds, not desiring an auditor in the maid, and baby having lifted up his voice, his mother suggested that Nell and herself should leave the carriage and enjoy a momentary view down the wooded cliff, taking in the Chaudière Falls and as much of the beautiful in nature as five minutes would permit.

But while Hazel had a passion for all or any artist bits Dame Nature revels in, Nell, giving but one admiring glance, turned and faced her sister in the romantic lover's walk, when, placing her small, firm hands on her shoulders, her beautiful little face, usually so cold and passionless, now full of earnestness:

"Hazel, sister, why have you not confided in me about, — about Pat?"

"I couldn't, Nell, dear, you would have been so worried, knowing uncle would not permit you to come to me," she said, brokenly, her bosom heaving, her eyes filling with tears.

"You must not cry, Hazel, I never do, it spoils one's eyes, and one can be sorry all the same, as I am for you dear, and mad, too," with a stamp of her dainty Oxford tie, crushing the ferns and moss beneath her foot. "It's a shame, I cannot tell you how badly I felt when I realised it all in seeing Pat; how disappointed I am. Poor, nasty Pat, how silly of him to make you sorry and spoil his own life and pretty house, how dare he! Oh, you have volumes to fill my ears up with as we go to the Sandbanks, I mean after governor Beauvais leaves us to our own devices; that person, too, how did you name her? Oh, yes, I remember, Miss Belleville, she is fine-looking and has a cunning hand in combining colors, but her face wears a hard look; mine could grow like that but it isn't yet, so I can throw mud at her. You have never named her in your letters, yet I gather she is very intimate at your place, how is that?"

"Because she is a friend of Pat's; but come, dear, it is not becoming to poke into the mire heap of one's life immediately before taking part in a social function."

Nell's beautiful little face was bent in thought for once, not seeing a group of gentlemen lift their hats to Hazel with the gallant grace of the men at the capital.

"I begin to see," she murmured slowly, looking intently at her sister as they neared the carriage, "and but that you are so forgiving, and not wicked, like I am, I should wonder how you can take it so well—can act as you do."

"One must act as one can when one cannot act as one wishes, Nell, dear." And while the driver gave his horses the whip, bringing them swiftly to the gates of Veteran Lodge, Hazel, having the greater power of adaptability, by devoting herself

to baby, also finally succeeded in drawing Nell from the company of silent thought by chit-chat of their faithful servant, Betsy, having gone on to the Sandbanks from Toronto. "How did she go, Nell?"

"Via Port Hope to Trenton by G.T.R., thence by C.O.R. to Bloomfield, where they—the proprietors of the hotel—would, if the truth is within them, have a trap to meet her. We both left the Queen city about the same time this a.m., Bet from the Union depot, this child from the C.P.R. station, North Toronto."

"How is uncle going to range himself without Betsy?"

"Oh, in an erratic fashion, his matutinal meal at a *recherche* hotel, in the language of Betsy, 'near by'; his luncheon at Coleman's, his dinner at either the Hub, Webb's or Thomas', where, to judge by the tears of joy that roll down his whiskered cheeks in clacking of same, he hath found the spot and the man who cooketh for him the 'savory dish his minute soul loveth.'"

Thence Hazel drifted into chit-chat of Mary Gunn's disappointment as to her brother Roderick's non-appearance.

"He must, in every-day parlance, be 'awfully nice.'"

"I hate paragons," said Nell, "have you never endeavored to improve the occasion by gazing upon this one, by listening to his goody goody discourse?"

"No," smiled Hazel, "I have never even seen a pasteboard imitation of him, he has been taking an Arts course at the University of Toronto. I was not well enough to see him when he was at home last, and all this summer he has been doing some of Muskoka's loveliest spots, but I am quite sure he is neither a prig, hypocrite, or anything mean, or he would not be kin to Col. Gray or Mary Gunn; no, nor friend of Donald McLean." In her earnestness, not noticing she had made use of McLean's Christian name.

"Oh, I see, said the blind man, and if so, I wish the absent Roderick were one of us, as in the language of Hamlet, Prince of Darkness, otherwise my small *fiancée*, Hamlet Rice, I am looking 'very lovely' this evening, and would have exercised my dormant skill at flirtation by indulging in a few rounds with this master of arts."

And so, by such outward fancies, sorrow sank to her silent cell, leaving the bright gleam of a happy reunion to the sweet face of Hazel Leary, and also to that of our pretty Nell.

Nearing "Veteran Lodge," one can see it is not young, having grown up in the style of Messrs. Jones & McGreevy, of over a quarter of a century ago, old but strong and massive, in white brick, the relieving arches over the doors and windows being of red sandstone, the interior being fashioned, frescoed and garnished in the best and most comfortable of modern styles; large rooms noticeably homelike; its numerous windows bright and inviting; its broad stone steps and wide open hall-door bespeaking a hearty welcome and lavish hospitality; kindly, handsome, soldierly Colonel Gray, a British officer, now of the Militia department, living up to his income, entertaining profusely.

Everything is on a generous scale, from the wealth of bloom in the garden to the numerous trees shading it from the street, in an inviting bit of woodland at one side of the house, which cooled the air by screening Old Sol's beams from the numerous friends and acquaintances of the lodge, who loafed in delicious *dolce far niente* under the trees, in the hammock with some favourite author, or when merry or sweetly grave in the white moonlight, either in dual solitude, whispering of thoughts akin, or laughing in merry groups at impromptu supper tables, in the contagion of "wit that catches of wit, as fire of fire."

On the arrival of pink-gowned Hazel and white-robed Nell, they find Mrs. Gunn and Mr. McLean *tête-a-tête* in the drawing-room, in which is an odd but not incongruous blending of modern brick-a-brac and feminine embellishments, showing the bright individuality of Mary Gunn, with historic relics of the dead past in her father's fighting days. Curious in niches and on panels, among them are many Highland trophies, from the shean dhue, that semi-concealed splitter of throats which had peeped from beneath the hose with more than a hint of treachery, to the pistols, dirk, claymore and feathered tam-o'-shanter, all of which Nell's observant eyes took in at a glance, reminding her of some treasured relics belonging to her late Irish grandfather, who had also been an army man, and whose trophies had been given an honored place by her dead parents at their house in the forest city of London, Ontario.

Yes, the large, inviting reception rooms at Veteran Lodge pleased the luxurious taste of our pretty blonde Nell, as did the introductory bow of McLean.

"No woman need be sorry to tears over a *tête-à-tête* with you," she mentally decided; "though you are not handsome, only good to loo; at in a manly sense, not tall enough for my six foot ideal, and with blue eyes, when I prefer brown; but you decidedly take the bun from Pat, for you don't smell as if you held large stock in Belier's restaurant."

Colonel Gray having recently added to his stock of etchings, in a few minutes they had drifted in an evanescent way to art.

"Hazel tells me you are fond of the brush, Miss Carew; indeed, she has shown me some of your very pretty work both on china and everything, I was going to say."

"Pray don't Mrs. Gunn, for I merely flirt with my brush in a manner neither serious nor profitable."

"Come here, Nell," said Hazel, delightedly, who was admiring an etching, McLean beside her, who himself did a little object-sketching merely as an amateur.

"See, sister mine, what think you of this fishing scene on the Newfoundland coast, by Hamilton Hamilton?"

"Think, Hazel? Why, that I would rather be the dying fish in the bottom of the boat than the poor fisherman doubly alive, with the great dread of that black fog overtaking him from behind."

"I can guess your thought, Mr. McLean," said Hazel, with one glance at his face.

"I should not wonder; what is it?"

"You pity the lonely figure in the boat, and had you sketched that scene would you not have given him, say, perchance, a little son as companion? You would, at least, have given him a faithful dog."

"A fox terrier," interposed Mrs. Gunn, humorously.

"You have again read me correctly, Mrs. Leary," he said, quietly; for he will not give expression to the pleasurable feeling of affinity, for, alas, she is another man's wife, and withdrawing his gaze from the sweet and somewhat sad face so dear to him.

"You had better avoid Mrs. Leary for the future, Donald, if you desire to wall up your pet secrets," said Mrs. Gunn.

"Mrs. Leary would turn a deaf ear to some of them, I am afraid," he said, with a latent meaning.

"Oh, you need not warn a canny Scotchman, Mary; they are all well up in Burns' saying that 'if one tells everything one knows, one knows nothing one's self.' But excuse me one moment, Mary, dear," she said, looking uneasily from the window on to the wooded lawn, where Col. Gray with Beauvais and Leary sat chatting. "Just a minute, Mary; the sun is shining full on Pat's head, the others are shaded, and my poor husband suffers so severely from headache. I must take him his hat. Baby, too, seems uncomfortable in his papa's arms, poor wee pet."

In a trice they see her slight form the centre of the lawn group.

"Father is to take you into dinner, Miss Carew. Suppose we follow Hazel and make you acquainted."

"With pleasure, Mrs. Gunn. Do look at Hazel! how carefully she is of my esteemed brother-in-law, and how angelically she smiles upon that benign rotundity, Monsieur Beauvais, though I am pleased enough with his kindness to Pat. He is amply refunded if Hazel's gratitude compels her to smile herself into future wrinkles in his honor. I firmly believe were she a child-widow of absurd India, were she grateful, forsooth, to her husband, that she would wrap herself up in lucifer matches and let him set fire to her before the breath was out of his selfish old body."

McLean looked grave, while her words were stamped indelibly upon his memory to be recalled in an agonizing moment.

"You read Hazel aright, Nell; I may call you so, may I not?" said Mrs. Gunn, putting the girl's arm affectionately through her own. "Thank you; I love your sister, and feel as if you are a new little friend. You know, though, I was a young lady with the fine polishing touches being given me at Miss Dupont's when Hazel came a mere child. Still we developed affinities even then, and hers is the most unselfish character I ever met," and on Nell assenting warmly, the heart of Mrs. Gunn went out to the lovely girl at her side, so wilful, so passionate, and yet with those passions mostly dormant; on

the eve, too, of stepping into Vanity Fair, with its untried, untold temptations, the bride, too, of a man of dollars, for whom she has no love.

While McLean, though thinking slower, thought in the same strain, and as they neared the lawn group of which pink gowned Hazel is the centre, he longed to take those two sisters in his strong arms, shielding, protecting them from the pit-falls they may in their innocence of evil stumble into, for they seem to him to be so alone, without kin, save this Uncle Carew who for some unaccountable reason has since their father's death kept them apart.

And his honest, manly heart well nigh bursts as the reason of Hazel's hasty retreat dawns upon him, in seeing her sweet, troubled face bending nervously over her husband, endeavoring in vain to stay his hand in giving his baby boy repeated tastes of fire-water.

"He likes it, Haze, go away; hurrah for heredity! if you had your way you'd bring him up a despicable milk-sop."

For once McLean is deaf to Colonel Gray's praises of his beautiful pair of fox terriers that had taken a prize at the Toronto Industrial Fair the year previous; he had only eyes and ears for the pitiable scene before him, and presses his lips determinedly to keep back the cutting words, when, to hold himself in hand, taking a card from his pocket, he makes a very fair sketch of Hazel as above, writing beneath it:

"And though sweet face, red lips, nor light brown hair, I dare not touch—I—love her—so."

A few moments and he has a treasure all unknown to Hazel; who herself has a half formed idea that in time he will come to love Mary Gurn if he does not do so already.

On looking up and down once or twice from the face of Hazel to the card in his palm, he had been intently watched by Beauvais, whose expression quickly changed from passionate tenderness, veiled by philanthropic anxiety with which he had been regarding Hazel, to that of demoniac jealousy. At the same moment the eyes of the two men met, and that look was enough and more to tell the secret of each to the other, while Beauvais, with a sneering smile into the face of McLean as if to say, from his vantage ground, the man did not live who could elbow him, with a look of authority was advancing to Leary,

when Nell, leaping from the rug where she had been seated chatting to Colonel Gray and petting McLean's terriers, sprang towards her brother-in-law when Beauvais, being in a head's length, took the glass from the hand of Leary, saying:

"That will do, young gentlemen should not grow sleepy in their cups in the presence of ladies."

"Oh, don't go off into heroics, Beauvais, he'll be as gentlemanly as you are about it when he is old enough to be his own father," Leary said, crossly.

"Poor little chap," said Nell, "tell papa he did not notice your 'blue ribbon' signal, even if it is only the reflection of the heavens in your baby eyes."

"Yes, my pet," said his mother, taking and hugging him tight, "you will coax papa to take his colors from the skies too," and swiftly bringing him to the nurse, she gave her strict injunctions to take him to the morning room until further orders.

CHAPTER IV.

A RAZZLE DAZZLE TIME!

To the new department,
To see the new minister we hie,
Who hath diversified hair
And a yellowish tinge in the eye.



N the sedate old butler coming with quickened steps to the lawn and announcing dinner, in a few moments they were a merry party in the oaken dining-room.

Over the glittering glass and glistening silver on the table was suspended from the gaselier a short-handled, green silk parasol—after a Parisian fad—which was filled with the choicest bloom, filled and overflowing, hanging over the edge in luxuriant masses, many of the trailing blossoms and beautiful leaves touching the damask napery.

Although McLean, being a man of honor who has himself well in hand, and has perforce never by word or look driven

Hazel from him by permitting her to read his heart, still, being but human, cannot repress a thrill of exaltation as her fingers rest on his arm in taking the places assigned them at the table, while Beauvais could readily have boxed somebody, on his host saying, cheerfully, as he seated Nell at his right hand:

"You wear a bereaved look, Beauvais; upon my word it's too bad that Mrs. Louis had a prior engagement. Mrs. Gunn had assigned her to you—a grass widow, too, for Louis is stumping the country, or just now the neighbouring crosier province, in the interests of the Equal Righters."

"We would have gone in heavy, at all events," replied Beauvais, with a forced laugh, and alluding to their respective rotundity, "notwithstanding that she is a bit of a chicken."

On the general laugh subsiding, Nell, with a smart air, said:

"I suppose she is painfully young and painfully hungry. I feel very much like a chicken myself until you give me a crumb from the tree of knowledge by passing your joke to me."

"A little bit of white innocence abroad, eh!" said Leary, taking more sherry than soup; "the lady Beauvais is wearing the willow for, pro tem., I use the words advisedly, is fat, fair and forty, a citizen of our tower-crowned capital, a Canadian by birth, but with a Parisian nose."

"A Parisian nose!" cried Nell, saucily, and indicating by a gesture the spoon with which she supped her soup. "I would not give this spoon for any French nose, political or social, in all Ottawa or Montreal, and to-day I have seen Canadian noses on French faces that were the only redeeming feature they possessed."

At this there was much merriment, Hazel saying:

"How about the nose of our late dear Premier, Nell, we'll say on the handsome French face of the Minister of Militia?"

"Ah! that would have a rum look, gentle sister," Nell replied, coolly.

"What next?" cries Nell, her host telling her that Mrs. Louis having lost her nasal organ through ill-health, had gone abroad, and at Paris during a hypnotic state had had a new nose erected from the breast-bone of a chicken.

Mr. Beauvais, who could no longer endure the being a witness to the seemingly interesting conversation between McLean and Mrs. Leary, whose sweet face, in a glow of feeling, ever and anon made itself visible to him from above or between the floral adornments, without a word of apology, he interposed with—

"Oh, Mrs. Leary, it just now recurs to my memory that I have your prayer book, enclosed in your veil, since escorting you from St. Alban's on last Sunday evening. Have you missed them?"

"No, I don't think I have; one doesn't hear the private chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich every Sunday, and my thoughts were veiled in him."

"Monsieur Beauvais!" says Mrs. Gunn, solemnly.

"Madame!"

"I trust you have profited by the temporary possession of aforesaid book of Common Prayer!"

"How so?" smiles Beauvais.

"Why so; because there is no doubt in my mind that the leaving of it with you was a premeditated act on the part of our mutual friend, who thought you in need of the prayers of the church."

The gay old boy laughs, looking at Mrs. Leary, who says:

"Now, had I insinuated anything of the kind, it would have been veiled, and by Mr. Beauvais' own showing."

"But, Hazel, cries Nell, "we at Broadacres, North Toronto, have been under the impression that you have been bowing the knee with the baker's dozen at St. George's instead of carrying the cross at St. Alban's."

"Pat will show his claws, Nell, dear, if you allude to the 'thirteen.' He does not go with the witty clergyman, who sings, 'Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus, left behind the door.'"

"No," says Leary, as the butler refills his glass with hock, "I like to be sure of salt to my porridge, and so here's confusion to anti-Jesuit or any other party cry."

"Papa won't allow me to spoil his digestion by talking politics while dining, else I would take the floor as an able-bodied anti-Jesuit, Mr. Leary," says Mrs. Gunn.

"I was told a good story somewhat in this line of thought the other day," said Col. Gray, "and, though rather lengthy, will give it you. At a certain church in Scotland a lecture was delivered on 'John Knox and his Times.' After it was over, one old gentleman was heard to say to another, 'Man, wasna that grand! Ye would hae thoct the auld times back again whan he wis tellin' about hoo they broke the eemages, burnt the altars, an' stript the kirks o' a' their Popish gew-gaws.' 'But,' replied the other, cautiously, 'I think they were ower sair on the kirks, an' they needna hae wasted a' the fine sculpturing; it wasna the faut o' the statues, I'm shair.' 'Ah, I see you're ane o' thae fine bodies, wha wad raither hae braw pictures than gude pure religion.' 'Na, na,' replied the other, sharply, 'but I like reason; the sun and mune were objects o' worship, an' what way did they na destroy them.' 'Jist because they were ower faur awa', confound them,' replied the ultra Protestant."

"Very good," says McLean, joining in the general laughter, "he was an iconoclast with a vengeance, but I like him though."

In a little while, Monsieur Beauvais feels called upon to make a wall of partition of himself by saying:

"I trust, Mrs. Leary, that you will have returned to the city in time for the Strauss concert."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Beauvais," she says, coming back from the Lone Land with McLean, who has been giving her a thrilling anecdote from Stanley's book."

"We have been speaking of the Strauss band concert," and his heavy eyes wore a reproachful look, "and hoping you will be with us in time. I shall secure seats at all events," and his look reminds her of everything of his fatherly attentions - as she construes them, when Pat is not himself, and she feels so dependent, that, though regretting the recall to her life troubles, shaking herself free of a pleasant moment of forgetfulness, she says:

"Thank you ever so much; I shall wire Pat of my return, and you will be sure to be aware of it."

Appended, and smilingly, he says:

"Thank you, it will be the first social function of any note."

"And a good leader too, Beauvais," said Colonel Gray. "I suppose you, Miss Carew, will hear them at Toronto?"

"Yes," she says without enthusiasm, adding in a low tone for her kindly host has inspired our pretty Nell with confidence, and the two have become fast friends. "Yes, colonel, I see and hear everything, lending an ear from the reserved seats, but," she adds a little sadly "I sometimes wonder if I should feel as happy as the other girls look, in the back seats with their escorts. I don't know anything about love," she whispers. "I only have one girl friend, Maud White, she is in love, and so happy," but uncle says a love match would never make me happy. He says it is idiotic nonsense, and I know I have extravagant tastes, and one can't have honey without money, and I just love the honey of life, you see, dear colonel. My dear parents gave me a taste for a parlor car through life, with unskilled fingers to procure a first-class ticket, so I just fell into uncle's trap and consented to marry H. R., and if I had said no, uncle said he would make me suffer, and I know he would, for Irish tempers cut up into queer shapes. Now I am sold to the highest bidder, so uncle is pleased and I am to be his heiress. He hates Hazel, and she is so sweet, but never fear, he is not an everlasting, and I will divide up with her some day. Now you understand, colonel, why I am impelled, as it were, to this marriage. I like you so I want you to think kindly of me. I would not condescend to explain my moves to every-one," she says proudly "but you— you understand now, don't you?" and her beautiful little face turns questioningly to his.

"Yes, I understand," he says thoughtfully, "inasmuch that were you my own little daughter, I would gather you up in my old arms and imprison you fast until I released you to some brave young fellow who had won your heart."

"But I am not at all sure I have one."

"Yes, you have, you would not be your father's daughter else, as I remember him at Eton, and afterwards as a man. A kinder, larger-hearted fellow never lived."

"Which schemers found out to his cost, poor dear," she says sadly, then brightening, "but Hazel the darling is large-hearted enough for us both."

"Yes, she has an unusually loving nature, God bless her."

Here a merry peal of laughter breaks in upon their converse.

"What is it all about, Mary?"

"Only this, father, we have been running over the many sights and sounds we women miss, from the fact that the mighty god, fashion, forbids us to go abroad in the eventide to public amusements unattended, and those people laugh me to scorn because I suggest a mode of escape, if fashion will endorse my idea, which is that impoverished widows—like myself—now I don't mean personally, for 'tis not every one could fill the bill of diversified hair and a yellowish tinge in the eye. I mean as to income, or the want of it, that we should rent ourselves out as chaperons, for a consideration, and thus see everything worth seeing, go every where, and, blessed privilege, not alone, and at some one else's expense. I have serious thoughts of applying for a patent for my invention, and now is the time for the Premier to create this new department into which, for the canvassing I have done for the party, he may pitchfork me, as minister, at a salary which I shall name. I perforce to provide impoverished widows with a testimonial from Grundy, and the seal of fashion as chaperons."

Colonel Grey laughed good-humouredly, Beauvais saying with a beaming face:

"'Pon honor, not a bad idea, we could spare the new department some of our space, eh, Leary?"

"Yes," he drawls, "if they unveil, I have no taste for the black flag."

"But it would distinguish them from the *débutante*," laughs Hazel, "as we have no society club providing escorts for lone women or even youngish mothers," she says, glancing shyly at her husband, intent on the bubbles on his champagne; "when, as semi-detached wives, we pine to make one at some public or social function; yes, Mary, I vote for the new department and its minister."

"Hear, hear!" says her host, amusedly, "and while we are on escorts, which route do you take to Kingston, Mrs. Leary?"

"The Rideau, colonel, and by steamer 'Rideau Belle' to the limestone city of Kingston, thence by the 'Hero' to Picton, where we shall stay over to make the five mile trip to Glenora, to see that freak of nature, the lake on the mountain-

top; returning to Picton, we drive eight miles to the Sandbanks. Dr. Wright prescribed the Rideau route for our wee home ruler."

"Yes, and a pretty bit of travel it is; I suppose you will run down with them, Leary, and see them housed safely?"

"No, Gray, as luck would have it, Beauvais is obliged to go as far as Smith's Falls, perhaps on to Kingston, and rather enjoys, so it seems, the rôle of lady's maid."

"That is fortunate," said Col. Gray, so heartily in all good faith as to the fatherly attentions of the gay old boy, thinking it done in real kindness, knowing, as he does, the unsteady steps of Leary.

At the same time, McLean lashes himself mentally for a feeling of uneasiness he cannot divest himself of, and, with a suspicious glance at Beauvais, reads the smile which permeates his rather handsome face as decidedly carnal.

Presently McLean, declining to linger after the ladies, repairs with them to the inviting lawn, and, as is usual in any chance meeting with Hazel Leary, is magnetized to her side, while she, with a genuine liking for Mary Gunn's friend, welcomes his approach in a charmingly, frank manner, making him feel at ease, that is outwardly, for, inwardly, he is sick at heart, knowing but that for an enforced absence from Ottawa, he would, at the time of her first visit, have asked her to make his life perfect by becoming his wife; but the fact of her innocence of his heart-burnings, though he is more in love with her sweet self at each meeting, he tells himself he is only doing himself harm by yielding, when chance favors him, to the great charm of her most congenial society.

They stroll about among the trees, talking in a fragmentary sort of way, for she, with, of late, an almost incessant feeling of uneasiness as to her husband's weakly, wandering footsteps, is preoccupied; which McLean seeing, merely touches on a variety of small matters requiring no thought in her replies.

"How beautiful the sunset is; see, Mrs. Leary, the brilliant flashes of red and yellow gleaming through the leaves and great arms of the maple and pine; Mrs. Gunn speaks glowingly of the glorious sunsets at the Sandbanks; truly, this is a beautiful world." They stand in silence a few seconds when he breaks in, a sort of fierce despair in his tones:

"What a pity there are so many imperfect lives ; is it our own fault, or is it that we are expiating the sins of our fathers ? Is it that we have been too eager to run our own course, and that the Almighty has given us over a prey to that horrible mis-creator, circumstance ?"

"Oh, I don't know, these are simply life puzzles to me," she says, a little impatiently, but a something unusual in his tone and manner, as he turns from the red glow through the leaves, like rubies in a setting of emeralds, and faces her, causes her spirit to come to his, all unwittingly, in a tender sympathy, and momentarily leaving thoughts of what the early morn will tell of Patrick's night, she throws herself into the present, with the feeling that just now her office is to comfort, and her sweet face looking more lovable, seeming in the shadowed evening light to have a new womanly tenderness, she says :

"It is not like you, Mr. McLean, to play the rôle of pessimist, and just now I require the moral support and faith in the eternal goodness of God, that your converse has ever given me in this rather troubled life of mine." The latter words she says to brace him, well knowing that his manly heart will forget this something that seems to have saddened him in a desire to be helpful to herself ; well aware that the unfortunate habits of her husband are common gossip, though individually she neither refers to nor speaks harshly of him.

"Come, let us join Mrs. Gunn and my bright little sister, I am but poor company for you this beautiful evening, I wish Roderick Gray had not disappointed us all, for, from what I hear, I feel sure his presence, like your own — generally," she says, smiling, "is very cheering."

"There, that's right, Mrs. Leary, pitch into me, I feel like a great selfish brute, at having done other than smile in your presence."

"Mr. McLean !" and in her earnestness she stands still as they stroll, "pray don't talk mere gallantry to me, be yourself ; the other tone is of other men, we are friends."

Though he feels as if he should thank her, for the life of him he can't, with a tumult of rebellious feelings surging at his heart ; friends, indeed !

There was a brief pause, in which Hazel took herself to task for one moment, forgetting her husband and his temptations, but still she says, kindly :

"You may have, indeed, if one's eyes are the index to the soul, a something which is troubling you, and I may venture, I think," she says, not looking up from a sparrow which has fallen, hurt by a catapult, at her feet, and which he has picked up, placing it in her small womanly palm, which she strokes tenderly; "yes, I think I may venture to give you my receipt for mental trouble; it is this—outward glances, Mr. McLean," and in the glow from the yellow west coming softened through the trees, she stood as sweet a picture of womanliness as ever the eye rested upon. "It grieves me to hear people who do not like you, say that you, my friend, are growing an idler; it is not so, I know, for from what you yourself have confided in me, I know better, and many of the late Mr. Quirk's tenants have given glad testimony to mission workers of your many substantial benefits, but still I am jealous of your honorable mention by those who do not like you. You are not partial to the law, why not go into the banking business, and give the poor a safe house to entrust their money to, that would be an occupation worthy of a man," and her sweet face turns questioningly to his.

"I fear," he says, in rather unsteady tones, "that what is said of late as to my being an idler, is only too true. I have only taken those outward glances in a fugitive sort of way to ease my conscience and give me more time to dwell on self; yes, I have been a miserable, moping idler."

"No, no, my friend, you must not malign yourself, but you must give up this moping, you must act. Mr. Quirk paid your manhood a compliment in giving you his money, he endorsed your views. Ah, I don't forget, Mr. McLean, to have heard you say that one section of humanity should not have the power to charge another part for living on this earth, but it ill becomes one so weak as I to play the mentor to another. But see, this little birdie is quite itself again, and eager to begin life anew, even though its heart is desolate," she says pitifully, indicating by a gesture the nest and eggs broken at her feet. "Hardy little creatures, they teach us many a lesson."

"Yes," he says, with a sigh, "it will begin life over again, as I shall, but we each have lost heart. I shall, after seeing Rod. Gray, and having a chat over old times, pack up and be-

take myself to the stir and onward rush of the American capital and lose this atom self, in doing some of the world's work."

"Spoken like a man!" she says heartily, thinking, I have the key to his fit of the blues, now Mary Gunn has actually rejected him.

"Tra, la, la, la, la, la, tra, la," whistled Nell musically, to the tune of the bugle call. "The forces are gathering, Mrs. Gunn, so adieu to the truly rural spots we have been recalling."

"Yes, here they come," echoed her lively companion, as she sips a delicious cup of coffee, bright as decanted wine. "Hazel and McLean to the slow measure of the dead march, my father and M. Beauvais, who, as general of the forces, is huge enough to magnetize a whole regiment, but, nevertheless, seems to have been deserted by your brother-in-law, or, which is more probable, he is off on furlough, for he would not dare desert."

The fact being that Leary had begged off, presumably to see the other men who were to camp with him at Kettle Island, Beauvais adroitly managing to give him a written slip with the words:

"Adele, at the Russell House elevator, at 8.55."

"Watch Hazel's rather pretty eyes distend as my newest slang salutes her ears," said Nell to Mrs. Gunn, mischievously.

"Oh, Hazel! you have missed ever so much. I beg your pardon, Mr. McLean. Mrs. Gunn has been rolling me up and down the Sandbanks, then giving me a lapping, lipping, dabbling, refreshing swim from the loveliest beach in Ontario, and if she doesn't romance we'll have a razzle dazzle time."

"Razzle dazzle!" and with wide open eyes, she turns mutely to McLean.

"Oh, you needn't look at a quiet Scotchman for a definition," said Nell, smartly: "if you are in the dark you shouldn't try to dazzle him, and you a married woman, too. I shall certainly report you to the commanding officer. What a puzzle he would be in to construe a razzle dazzle time. As a good government *attaché*, M. Beauvais is, of course, too busy to have time for the classics."

McLean laughingly says, as he draws a garden seat nearer for Mrs. Leary, "Mrs. Gunn has evidently been endeavoring to dazzle you by her word-painting, Miss Carew."

"Oh, not at all, Mr. McLean, though there was only one spot on her sun, which was a famine of gentlemen. Now I don't like any such dearth, because H.R., an acquaintance of mine at Toronto, Mr. McLean, conjured me to partake of constitutionals every day. Now I had anticipated a country boy, smelling of green fields, as a companion, for one cannot pick one's self, in a country walk, up and out of the way of cows, dogs, and horses, which would kick at not getting the right of way every time. I had in my mind's eye a lad who had won a prize for good conduct at Sunday-school—Betsy would demolish any other—one who could repeat the church catechism without one mistake, to be my *carrier*; run the cows off, drive the horses by their own tails, speak loving words to the strolling dog, while he carried me over the thistles and mud; but now, alas! for my hopes, unless you come, Mr. McLean. Ah! here approacheth Governor Beauvais! Monsieur Beauvais, please tell me what is the meaning of the phrase, 'having a razzling dazzling time!' and, tossing back her golden bangs, she looks up at him saucily.

"Oh, having a real good time, which you will one day, I dare say, define for yourself," he says, pleasantly, thinking her a pretty picture as in a half-recumbent position, her white gown about her in fleecy billows in contrast to the leopard skin on the grass, one hand playing with three or four dogs, her pretty head resting on the rosy palm as, supported on her rounded elbow, she lay.

Beauvais, seating himself near Hazel, talks in a low tone for some time, when Mrs. Gunn, bringing out her banjo, she and Hazel sing enchanting duets and solos, McLean adding his tenor notes to the melody, lastly giving Millard's rather pathetic ballad of "Under the Daisies" in the words:

"The life of some is worse than death,
For fate a high wall oft raises."

Strange to say, only Hazel felt his heart in the words, thinking him inwardly suffering from Mary Gunn's rejection of his suit.

Nell and her kind host talked at intervals quietly, the latter full of regret that his handsome son Roderick had dis-

appointed them ; he chafes at the idea of the *chic* little daughter of his dead friend not having met his boy ere her betrothal, and says :

"I am sorry Rod. has missed meeting you, my little girl."

"And I am glad, colonel, for I just hate M.A. university paragons ; they make me feel extra wicked, and I know had your perfect son come he would have spoiled our excessively pleasant chat. Colonel," she whispers, "I would like you to kiss me good-bye, for when you see me again I shall be, oh, so different, as H. R.'s unloving wife ;" and after many regrets at parting in the lovely summer night, they wend their way from Veteran Lodge, Sandy Hill, to Metcalf-street, Beauvais again coming in a head length, having secured Hazel by a promised something to tell her of his arrangements for the comfort of her husband during her absence.

Nell found McLean very quiet, but kind and attentive ; though, as they stroll through the electric-lighted streets, Hazel's lithe form, as with the gay old boy she walks ahead, is all he sees, all he thinks of.

CHAPTER V.

BETSY KNEELS AT THE OAKEN CHAIR.

Whether we be theologian or Darwinian ; whether Puritan or epicurean ; whether our will is to be cremated or go down to mother earth like our grandsires, we all have our plot in society's garden.

AT Broadacres. North Toronto, a few days previous to the departure of Nell Carew for the capital, and during a two days' visit made by her to "Moyvane," one of the prettiest cottages at the beautiful beach at Hamilton, the joint heritage of herself and Hazel Leary, and which is rented by the mother of a girl friend of her own, it has come to pass, therefore, owing to the absence of our pretty Nell, that the master of Broadacres eats a solitary breakfast, waited upon by the faithful Betsy. He eats hastily, and as though

mechanically, in fits and starts, too, for the *News*, *Mail*, *Globe* and *World*, from which he has taken hurried snatches in a sort of hodge-podge medley have given him their tid-bits.

The news of the day seems to have had a salutary effect, but alas, evanescent, for though his still handsome face has shown more than one smile at the party moves and local hits, on rising from table, the look of worry that spoiled his face, on awakening to the new day, again sits upon his features, and he complains of everything, from the broiling weather to the delay in the appearance of the much-abused letter-carrier, from the flavor of the coffee to the butter, eggs and herring he has broken his fast on.

Betsy, listening quietly and respectfully, saying no word, until on his tall form hastening from the dining-room, she asks timidly, and with an unmistakable Scotch accent:

"How are ye feelin' this morn, master? Be your feet sae numb as they were yestreen?"

"Yes, confound them; the mustard you put into the soles of my socks might as well have been ice, for all the warmth it gave me. Just what one might expect from old women's cures. I shall go and consult Dr. Johnson when I reach Bloor-street, and see what he can do for me. My own idea is that my old enemy is giving me a reminder of a slight stroke I had of the deuced thing some five years ago, but, remember, not one word of this to Miss Carew, or to Mrs. Leary either; it's my belief disease is accelerated by the chatter of a pack of idle women."

"What ailment was it that ye had lang syne, master? I no hae heard your brither, the young leddy's father, gie it a name, though I ken you were no weel. Ye may tell it me, master, for ye ken I never clack."

"Yes, I thought of naming it to you, in case anything should happen, and I can trust you," and he paused, but though Betsy can act a lie, her conscience is tender, and yet, he has cause to trust her, too, for the lie she is acting is only a part of his own, and both plot for Nell. A few seconds, and he continues thoughtfully, "Yes I can trust you. At that time my illness commenced, as now, with numbness in the soles of my feet, and was a slight stroke of—paralysis."

"Gude God protect us, master—paralysis!"

"The same, Betsy, confound it, but Johnson instructed me before how to keep it at bay, and I mean to try to. No excitement, he said, and as I have some abominable worry every day, I mean to carry out my intention of making my will, and so get that off my mind. When this marriage of Miss Carew is *an fait accompli*, I shall be all right. I wish I had not allowed myself to be talked into permitting her to go galavanting with Mrs. Leary to this out of the way place, the Sandbanks—but that I have given my word, she should not go—just on the eve of her approaching nuptials, too. I am well aware it was Mrs. Leary's planning—silly creature that she is. I don't know what girls are made of now-a-days, with their love of gadding. They are nothing but a bundle of whims and bustles, and if there is any of the woman left, it is killed by corsets and cosmetics."

"Aye, sir, but Miss Nell is a bonnie lassie wi'out ony sich, there be na ane can hold a candle to her, unless it be Miss Hazel her sel'." And a glow of pride comes to her kindly face as she presses her hands to her bosom, a way she has when speaking of Nell. "If she waur only goin' to wed a gentleman, and a lad she loed, I wad be a happy woman, master," she said, with timid wistfulness.

"Love be hanged!" he shouted, irritably, and getting out of his striped flannel smoking-jacket into a light grey cloth coat matching his trousers and vest, and looking the gentleman the whole six feet length of him. "I hope you don't imbue Miss Carew with any such nonsense as so-called love?" and his look of anger terrified her; "Look here, woman, if you don't keep a sharp eye over her and report to me regularly after she goes on this proposed trip, for, remember, if she should return with any idiotic foolery in her vain little head about love-sick nonsense, and kick against her approaching marriage to Rice, I shall destroy the will I am about to make to-day, and cut her out completely, leaving the whole, mark me, the whole of my property to some outside interest; so if you love Miss Nell, as you pretend to, you will keep your weather eye open, and don't countenance any flirting with any idle young beggars, or dudes, with their brains in the wax of their moustache. Watch her. I tell you what, woman," and his face became purple and his voice thick with frenzied rage, "I

have my reasons for marrying her to Rice, one is, he cannot boast of his birth."

And going out the hall door, wresting it from the waiting hand of Betsy, in his excited wrath, slamming it with such violence as to knock Betsy on her knees, and a barometer from the wall simultaneously, she fairly cowering with fear as she buries her face in her folded arms on the hall chair while looking over her thin shoulder nervously.

"One who canna boast o' his birth," she said in a quaking voice. "Aye weel I ken, weel I ken; and of how the Carew pride suffe when he gies me, his serving woman, sich reason to keep the same true to her word to the low born lad, Mr. Rice. But the Master's temper! God protect us! and you, doctor, ordered na excitement. What if he should get anither stroke before he makes his will? Weel, weel, perhaps it is the best, the bairns would then share alike, for na ane kens, na ane kens how he hates Miss Hazel for her unblemished birth; but if the gude God lets him make his will, bonnie Missie Nell will gie her a full han', that she will, the dearie," when pressing her hands to her bosom, as with a sudden thought—kneeling upright—unfastening her gown she takes from a chamois bag, which is attached to a strong old-fashioned black guard hung around her neck, a miniature painting, and pressing it reverently to her lips then gazes affectionately upon the very lovely pictured woman's face, fair as the first flush of a glorious summer dawn, delicately chiselled features, and hair yellow as a golden sunset.

Betsy is a strange contrast to the painting in her loving hands: tall, angular and browned with the wear and tear of life, and with a large, ugly patch of black court plaster on her left cheek, giving her an odd, not to say uneven, appearance, and which no member of the Carew family has seen her without during the eighteen years of her service with them.

She has a habit as now, of thinking, and when alone talking in audible accents on her knees, no human being being cognizant of the secret she carries about with her. What a relief to the faithful creature, her simple faith in the all-seeing Creator, she alone can tell; the burden of silence would be awful, could she not talk of it in prayer. Her absorbing interest in the welfare and happiness of that idol she has set up

in the wilderness of her life is all she lives for ; our pretty Nell is as exacting, too, as most idols are in the treatment of their votaries, one day giving her sugar-plums as she does her parrot, the next frowns, though in her better moods acknowledging the famine of unselfish, disinterested love there would be in her daily life were the faithful Betsy absent from it.

For some time the lone woman kneels at the oaken chair, with murmured words or outspoken ejaculations such as :—

“Oh, God save her fra this new fangled thing they ca’ heredity. Thou didst reflect it on Jennie, yon slip made lang syne by my mither, but, oh, I beseech Thee, stay Thy han’, let not Thy wrath fa’ any more, let na lad find favor in the lassie’s een at yon spot ont his earth folks ca’ the Sandbanks ; raise up a high wall about her ain heart, so that nane shall steal her fra’ the lud, Mr. Rice, the ane she is to wed, and Thy ane gude time gie her a loe an’ pride in the bairns Thou wilt, doubtless, send her, so as there will be no bit space left for a longing after a lad pleasing to her ain bonnie een.”

In the meantime Mr. Carew, having gone down to Bloor-street with electric speed in the cabs, had hastened along Bloor west, when in half an hour he is again retracing his steps, his irritability evaporated. Having a prescription from Dr. Johnson in his pocket, boarding the street car at the corner of Yonge and Bloor, he is again on the wing to the corner of Carlton-street, where he leaves the prescription to be manufactured into swallowing form. On emerging, he is detained by two ladies, who ply him with questions as to the movements of our pretty Nell, who always turns up a disdainful nose as she bends her little haughty head on meeting them, as the word “canaille” almost passes her lips, but they are of the breed who can’t take a cut, and so Mr. Carew is put through a catechism as to when the marriage of Nell and Rice is to come off, the younger of his two questioners being very much in earnest, Addie Thomas by name, and the only daughter and heiress of a retired pork butcher, residing in a handsome suburban villa in the near vicinity of Broadacres, as far from a pork shop as possible : neither Thomas Pater nor Mater now knowing a pig when they see one.

At last Mr. Carew shakes them off, and the unwholesome-faced, vulgar, over-dressed girl and her aunt, Miss Pall, both talk at once in picking out pretty Nell and her movements to pieces.

Mr. Carew, not letting the grass grow under his feet, in a short space of time his numerous clients find him one of the busiest of city men, at his handsome desk in the inner court of his real estate offices, on Adelaide-street. There, after a lucrative hour, in which many thousands change hands on some tid-bits, including Searth's Falling Brook property, with several golden feet on Victoria-street, his clients satisfied, during a temporary lull, he turns to Pickford, his head clerk, an unpleasant, cunning-faced Englishman, and written all over his face, and says, hurriedly :

"I shall not return till after luncheon, Pickford ; I am going to my lawyers, the ——. You had better go down to Dun, Winan & Co. yourself, and ask them to look up the standing of this man, K. Dipple, who is after those houses on Brock-street. I am inclined to think he wants to play us a sharp trick. Yes, and have those papers filled in ; see Searth and my lawyers, or run across to Beaver, it will save time."

And his feet being forgotten in his head-work, he leaves the office, notwithstanding their numbness, with almost his usual swinging gait.

"His own lawyers, private business, a settlement, or to make his beautiful little niece his heiress, eh," thought Pickford, "what a lucky dog Rice is, the lovely blonde is tempting enough, without a shilling to her pretty back, that is with the bank account Rice has, for she is an expensive luxury. Gad ! how she walked over my adoration of her ; she is a spicy little devil, but she doesn't care a rap for Rice, that's where he is going to have his fur rubbed the wrong way ; she is only going to let him call her his, so as to become mistress of her uncle's pile, and only preferred him to myself because she desires to obliterate her pretty person from society's note-book as daughter of a bank defaulter, by becoming a society leader as a banker's wife ; that is why she scorned my offer of marriage, for had the little Venus cured a penny for appearance, she'd have linked herself to me instead of to that little match-end. Let me see, Nell Carew is at Hamilton for to-day, in one week she is off to Ot-

tawa; a month from that date she returns to Broadacres to be married, when the happy couple—in newspaper parlance, and only there—are off for their honey-moon, which, in their case, is all moonshine; but,” and the depravity of his face is accentuated, “ere they are made one by the Prayer Book, I will be with her at this love nest in Prince Edward county, and a fig for Rice’s claims then, for I’ll make hot love to her, I know, for with her, near her, the long summer day and evenings her exquisite beauty fires my heart to that extent I’ll be at her feet again. But if it’s no go, during their absence, and while the porker’s heiress heaves her sighs into the empty arms of space, I must dig and water my little plot, which is to call her money and self mine. She’ll be glad enough to fall into my arms when all chance of her becoming Mrs. Hamlet Rice is swept off the boards of fate.”

His reverie over, he rises and, going to the telephone, rings up Rice, to whom he has found it convenient to be useful.

“Hello! Central, give me 444444.”

“Hello! is that you, Rice?”

“Yes, Pickford, eh? your voice sounds muffled, too full of news to articulate distinctly, eh, what’s up?”

“A bit of news.”

“About your letter to Prince Edward Co.?”

“Yes, and another item, you had better meet me at the ‘Hub’ café, at 12.30.”

“All right, but can’t you run up, my time is crowded; two of my clerks are off?”

“Not to the S. B.?” laughed Pickford.

“No; and I’m deuced glad, too, they have gone to Muskoka, to Shadow River, to fish—for spoons; but, say, can’t you run up?”

“No; I’m full to the neck—with business.”

“All right, I am with you—‘Hub’ café at 12.30.”

On emerging at about 1.30 from above attractive doors, the gastric juice having freely flowed, the dark face of the small Stovel-made-tailor-made Rice, despite that Pickford’s news had only half pleased, still wore the well-fed smile of satisfaction; while the oily face of his companion beamed, for, though Rice is a mean man, he has paid for Pickford’s substantial

British meats and drinks, this seeming to be part of their compact.

As a rule, Small Rice is no conversationalist, determination and mathematics being written in every lineament of his face ; but this being an exceptional case, he says, with unusual length, as he turns with Pickford towards Wellington-street :

"You have mistaken your vocation, Pickford, you are a born detective. I was, however, aware, from Carew himself, that his intention was to make his will to-day ; everything, so he tells me, goes to my little beauty ; but he is as close as a woman is on her age, and usually as tight as my pants with his money. So, unless I see it in black and white that Mrs. Leary, of Ottawa, is cut out, I am doubting Thomas, but, of course, he will show me his will, there is no doubt about that," he says, pressing his thin lips determinedly. "Not but that I'd make her Mrs. Rice all the same, if she hadn't a cent, for I want what I want, and can buy a beautiful wife as well as a superb horse, fashionable dog, or any fancy I have, such as birth for instance ; my beauty has that, and my boy of the near future may be a baronet—Irish, to be sure."

"I don't see how you can make that out," broke in his companion ; "he will be a Rice."

"I generally know what I am talking about, Pickford, as you know, and what with the famine of potatoes, famine in rents, the head of the family," he said, loftily, "may be glad to sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage."

"Or, Rice," laughed the other.

"As that's the first joke you ever perpetrated, I pardon it, taking it as a forerunner of what is to come to—the family of Rice. Gad! how the men in town will envy me as we drive along King-street. When I see this will of Carew's in black and white—why he must be worth over one hundred thousand dollars. Gad! I'll keep a racer besides my carriage horses ; we'll be the greatest sensation at the next meet down at the Woodbine course, driving in my new stylish Gladstone, and with my own racer entered ; I already have Alf. Tyrril in my eye as my jockey. But here we are, nearing Dun, Wiman's. I don't like what you have heard from Picton, as to the romantic walks and drives at the Sandbanks, and must think out some plan to watch Nell when she goes, and check-

mate the moves of any idle, loafing fellows who may be guests at the hotel, and may endeavor to induce her to moon around with them: hang them! And she may get to flirting, I don't know, as, so far, her uncle has kept a sharp eye on her," he said, moodily, "but still she is no fool, and will not go in for anything of the kind as we are to be married in a few weeks, but she is wilful, and a great beauty, so I must look after my interests. Come and dine with me at the 'Arlington' this evening and I shall have concocted a plot."

In the evening, after dining, the two repair to the privacy of Rice's own apartment, a luxurious room on the second flat, facing King-street.

"I have it Pickford; you say Carew has promised to let you off for two weeks, any time within this month; you also say those people, the Barks, take boarders, and live within easy walking distance of the Surf Beach House, on a romantic avenue, too."

"Just so, Rice, quite a lovers' walk, my friend Moore, of Picton, writes me; overhanging tree-boughs, interlacing, and all that sort of thing, with no end of beautiful woods in the background. In fact, in the catching words of the poet, a natural avenue, cut through the ancient primeval forest, with everything in a fellow's favor, who is up to spooning on some, not too coy, 'summer girl.' He says he is often taken that way himself."

"Fool! conceited ass! if I caught him fooling around Nell, I'd knock his ugly head to a tree."

"Not so fast, Rice; Burt Moore is a deuced good-looking fellow—that is for a Canadian—of course I say it without boasting, we Englishmen have more style, more presence, but by George! Rice, you cannot sew up men's eyes, they will look at Miss Carew," he said cunningly, and to spur Rice for what he sees is working in his mind.

"I bet my life," said the small man angrily, "she wouldn't throw a glance his way, unless it was a cutting sneer; she knows which side her bread is honeyed on, she knows it, isn't every man has a fine house, planned by the best architect in the city, art-adorned by McCausland, and furnished jointly by Rogers and Allan, and on St. George-street, too, ready for her to queen it in, not forgetting my own appearance and

position, which I know, from many a fair dame, to be nobby to a degree," he said, glancing complacently at a mirror. "But to my plot, which is that you go down to the Sandbanks. You start, you seem surprised!" and the cunning fellow did, though he himself had planted the seed of this product in the mind of the other, "nevertheless, my plan is a good one, which you shall see. You must put up with those Barks people; I need not say I shall foot your bill, as you go in my interests. Beg pardon, what is it you wish to say, not that you decline, I won't believe it," and he passes his elaborate Morocco cigar case towards him, admiring the lights in the superb solitaire diamond flash in the movement of his left hand.

"Only this," replied Pickford, for the truth is not in him. "I have had an idea of Muskoka or Kingston. Addie Thomas tells me they are either going to Windermere, Muskoka, or to the hotel, 'Frontenac,' Kingston, but if——" and he leaves the other to fill in the gap, as he bites the end off a Hortensia cigar with a rather unsavory set of teeth.

Rice, leisurely, and with a self-satisfied smile, whiffs the ashes of his cigar off his elegant cashmere vest, with the finest of linen pocket-handkerchiefs, as he says conceitedly:

"You look high, Pickford."

"I don't know that, they are only new dollar people."

"Yes, but old man Thomas will only give dollar for dollar. If I thought you had the ghost of a chance, I'd say, go in and win, but you have none. No girl who had been spoons on me would console herself with a, a—well—a man made up so—so differently, don't you know."

Conceited little match-end, thought his companion, but he swallowed the pill with no sensation of having been spat upon.

"True, you have a fat purse, but still I am hoping that, as some one says, the heart may be caught in the rebound, even though every eye forms a beauty, and you are hers. But for your plot."

"Yes, and now to business," said Rice, making as if to roll up his cuffs, thereby giving Pickford an envious glance at his diamond sleeve buttons. "You say you have masqueraded in female attire more than once, and not once too often well, suppose you go down, in say ten days, and previous to leaving

the city shave off that incipient moustache of yours, go down and masquerade as gentle Susan, or Susan gentle, which you will. Betsy, the old girl-housekeeper, you know you've seen her at Broadacres, goes down the same day my little beauty leaves for Ottawa, that will be about one week from to-day; you could chum with her in the evenings, worm yourself into her confidence, to account for donning female garb. Tell the people with whom you board that you are a detective."

"Yes, that's already on the cards; if t'were only for my stomach's sake—British at that—these bucolic inhabitants are so mortally afraid of a detective that they will kill and cook the best meat and drink in the county for the detective from Toronto. Proceed, what next?"

Rice, with a small smile and a largely thoughtful air said:

"I'll first tell you how the case stands. I have never seen my little beauty in the company of gentlemen, and am curious to come at whether she is a latent flirt. I want to know whether I can trust her after we are married; had it been possible for me to go down it would not have answered my purpose one half as well as the sending of you, for, as a matter of course, she would have been escorted by myself constantly. You are aware she was but fifteen when she came to live with her uncle Carew, at the time of her father, Maston Carew's suicide; she is barely eighteen now, and in those three years would have forgotten the creation of Adam and his probable fall at her pretty feet, and had not Carew fixed on me for his nephew, and brought me, not unwillingly, to Broadacres. As I had heard you rave of her beauty, and Addie Thomas decry it—which latter made me surer of it than your raving; after a long siege she gave way, consenting to become Mrs. Hamlet Rice. With her extravagant tastes, what else could she do? As it is, when my wife, she will be in a position to gratify every whim. But I tell you what it is, Pickford, with all the advantages she will have, I am deuced anxious to see how she will stand the fire of other men's eyes."

"Yes, I understand. What kind of a married woman has the other sister developed into in—if Dame Rumour speaks truth—that hot-bed of married flirts, Ottawa. I remember her when they came from the Forest city, a devilish pretty dark-eyed girl. She married Leary off-hand, didn't she? If

she is like Cæsar's wife, I don't see that you have, perhaps, so much cause for uneasiness."

"Yes, as you say, perhaps not. Mrs. Leary is as straight as a die; but my little beauty, by her own showing, too, is her very opposite in character as in looks. I wish those abominably seductive Sandbanks were at the other end of creation. I cannot go, as I have no end of business; my London, Eng., batch to put in shape for my New York agent to put through for me when he crosses the pond, in fact I have to go down to Gotham myself, but you can manage the espionage of my little girl tip-top, I know. Carew has himself given Betsy strict orders to watch her, and if you keep her in a constant fidget with tales of wild doings of any idle, loafing fellows who may be trying to make up to my beauty, all will be well."

"I'll do my level best, Rice, depend upon it," said he dwelling lovingly on another iced claret, and eyeing two pretty girls in boating costume, with their escort, on the other side of King-street.

"What you've got to do is to make the old girl, Betsy, look alive, roll any fellows who may be ogling Nell right down in the mire, throw any amount of mud at them, for I won't have myself a laughing-stock to men who have not a cent to rub against another, by the fact of my beautiful little bride-elect flirting with anyone on the eve of our marriage. A man with the bank account I have has a right to better treatment than a beggarly clerk. Now, can you put this matter through for me?" and his small blue eyes looked penetratingly into the oily face of his companion. "Can a man work for his own interests? that's about the size of it," and his clenched fist went down to the marble of the table with such violence as to make the cut glass bottles in the quaint silver liquor-stand ring.

"I both can and will, Rice, and shall enjoy the giving my talents full play, and," he added, with an unctuous laugh, "in the knowing you are my banker, but in this masquerading, I am free to be myself, gentle Susan, or any other man, and now for the mimic stage—the Toronto Opera House, and Lily Clay's gauzy females, to make time fly on wings of gauze, eh!"

"Yes, let's be off. One needn't dress, as it's not the Grand, but I'm toggged up enough, even for there, during the silly

season," he said, in self-adulation, though at the same time encircling his throat in a fresh linen manacle.

"I thought you expected Carew to make one of us this evening?"

"I don't see how you could, as I had this matter to go over with yourself," said Rice, locking his bedroom-door, and leaving the key at the handsome office, continuing as they momentarily waited for a King-east car, "and, as for going with us to see this gauzy troupe, he'd see us hanged first. He draws the line in leg shows at 'Fust Up to Date.' You see Carew prides himself upon his gentlemanly powers of discrimination. So much for blue blood. See what I am bringing on my first boy, whom I shall name Carew."

"And give the kid," laughed Pickford, "the whole responsibility of drawing the line at gentlemanly pleasures, even though he gets the blues."

"Yes, just so," laughed Rice, as they boarded an open car. "Though having only every-day plebeian red blood, I have the almighty dollar—so shall indulge my mathematical eye for—figures, then as now."

CHAPTER VI.

BEAUTIFUL COUNTY OF PRINCE EDWARD.

"Come where skies are smiling,
Where the merry waters play,
Where glad birds are singing,
Free from care the live-long day."

WERE one a poet one should be inspired to idyllic verse by the varied beauties of Ontario's fairest county of Prince Edward; but if not gifted in the art of rhyming, one must speak *con amore* of its lake shore choicest bits which border on our witching, waltzing, changing, ever-alluring, always beautiful Lake Ontario.

Nature has, indeed, been prodigal in her gifts to this garden of Canada, even in the interior, giving rippling streams, gurgling brooks, with miniature lakes in which the generous growth upon their banks reflects themselves in lending refreshing shade to the happy denizens of this highly-favored county.

The Sandbanks, which lie east of Wellington and on the main line of coast, forming in part the background of a promontory jutting out between—in county parlance—east and west lakes, are a wonderful phenomena to which hundreds of amazed tourists each successive summer turn admiring faces.

On the promontory which juts out into the blue ozone-laden waters of Lake Ontario is located a summer hotel, which I shall re-baptize without the consent of its sponsors, as The Surf Beach House.

'Tis a wondrously beautiful spot, this promontory or cape and its surroundings, in which one revels in laziest *dolce far niente*, or, in active eagerness, climbs to the summit of the Sandbanks to feast one's eyes in the breadth of view. Oh! how one glories in the lavish extent of sky, land and water, after the pent-up life of cities! One pines to carry away with one a lasting memory of such a scene to brighten darker days, drearier times.

To the east, one is within easy reach of—for situation—that king among towns, Kingston, with its enchanting and varied St. Lawrence trips.

The bracing air on this promontory banishes the blues, be they Prussian, indigo, or Quebec, putting the whole horde of them to flight, drowning them in the wide waters of Lake Ontario.

About and in the vicinity are some of the most delightful walks and drives in Canada. The sweet-scented woodland, with its wealth of pines, balsam, and cedar holds in itself an endless and ever-varying charm. Here Martens would find warm artist bits his soul would revel in, with something of life, too, in mayhap a stray couple or group of guests from the hotel, in gay gipsy trappings; or he might often come upon cattle lazily content and dozing in the cool shadows.

Here Nature is her own gardener, and is lavish in her breadth and beauty, everything being *en deshabille*, even to

the farmyard fowl which one sees strutting about in the cool comfort of half its feathers.

Then for contrast, for man's nature is changeful, one bends one's steps down to the southerly point, down to the rock-bound shore, in which are the coolest, cosiest little coves, in which one can hide and dream; dream, gazing out to the waters which lap one's bare feet in a deliciously cool caress, and though one may be in solitude, save for a novel, one is not lonely, for one has the music of the waters, the lapping of the waves, or singing one's lullaby, or trilling sweetest music as one's mood is. Here should Bell-Smith come, and set up his easel on the long stretches of huge flat boulders which form such very comfortable seats, or health-giving promenades; here he would find many a study for his pure, beautiful, unsensuous pictures.

Again, another attraction for sweet-faced Hazel and our pretty Nell will be the invitingly extensive sand beach, with, on many days, the surf dancing, dashing, wildly leaping, as by the sea; other days, moving only to the tune of laughing ripples, but ever and always wooing one to become *pro tem*, a nymph or water-sprite.

But the white sand-hills, the miniature mountains—how can one convey an idea of their wonderful appearance? Many of them two hundred feet in height; one, a long ridge, its summit an even line of some six hundred feet, sharply outlined against the blue of the sky, its base resting upon the rich verdure of grassy carpet, studded with a belt of cedar, which bars, in a measure, its stealthy encroachment. Climbing to the summit which, after rain, is firm to one's feet, having carried a spade, by digging a few feet in depth one comes to the cool snow, resting quietly in its strange bed.

In the white moon-light, one has curious fancies of some ghostly agent walking by night, in mystic whiteness, over these strange white hills, and shifting or guiding them at will.

A word-painting gives but a very faint idea of the contrast they present to the rich farms, the glowing fields, the corn ripe unto harvest. From any point looking east one has a heavenly sight, which lives in the memory in the beautiful sunrise.

Yes—

"Out of the shadow of night,
The world moves into light,
It is daybreak everywhere."

While the sunsets, from the hills or by the shore, are marvels of beauty, and I know full well they will cause our pretty Nell to break forth into exclamations of delight, while Hazel's deeper feelings will be expressed in the hush of a silent joy.

They had boarded the steamer "Rideau Belle" at 11 a.m., on Thursday; Mr. Leary, though paying the price of his dissipation of the previous night, on a very unsteady pair of legs, making a supreme effort, with much lament and many yawns over being forced into harness by Beauvais, managed to see them leave the canal basin.

In passing through the maze of beautiful scenery of the Rideau river and lakes, that gay old boy, Beauvais, is in his natural element as squire aux dames, at times leaving Nell beside the sleeping baby, taking care she is supplied with the daintiest of bon-bons, and in the yachting company of Geoffrey Hampstead, while he revels in the society of Hazel on the promenade deck, pointing out to her the prettiest views in neighbouring and passing Manotick, Kemptville, Burritt's Rapids, and Smith's Falls, at which latter place Beauvais had made a pretence of having business; but being near Hazel until Saturday is to him so seductive, he decides to go on to Kingston. He scarcely removes his heavy eyes from her lithe, girlish figure, gowned in navy blue, short—that is, easy walking length

full plain skirts with trim jacket, striped blue and white flannel blouse, her fair, round throat showing above the turned-down sailor collar, her navy blue sailor hat, with its band of ribbon same coloring as blouse, from under which her brown eyes look up at him in innocent trustfulness. Standing in the bow of the steamer, as she came to and passed Oliver's Perry, or thereabouts, she said, following up their talk of her home-life:

"Is it quite true," she says, brokenly, "that Pat has—has been less temperate since our marriage?"

"Why, who has been telling you?" he asks, knowing full well, and not regretting her knowledge.

"Miss Belleville. She said it when she was angry with me, the other evening, for opposing his going to Madame Leiro

Vilaine's river party. Miss Belleville was to be Pat's canoe companion. You see, Mr. Beauvais, I am sometimes afraid to think of Pat being in a canoe. Miss Belleville was, oh, so angry. She says I am slow, and Pat is sorry—but I cannot frame the cruel words she says he says of me. Oh! I do try to be kind and patient with him, poor fellow. But does he take—take more—now?" and her pretty hands move about restlessly, nervously, one in the other, as she looks up to his face with the hope of a negative reply.

"Don't bother your pretty little head," he says, with the boldness of the man who knows the woman he loves is near, and with no escape at hand, but her look of dismay impels him to say, "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise! Miss Belleville talks too fast."

"I want to walk back to baby and Nell," she says, her face so pale that her beautiful lips are scarlet by contrast, for she has heard his somewhat rough confirmation of the words of Miss Belleville, and some instinct leads her from him to Nell and to her baby, that she will carry to her stateroom and cry over.

While Beauvais is glad to be able to torture her—mad that he cannot win her love from the husband he has been doing his utmost to wean her from—mad at what he terms her coldness, when he would fain have ordered everyone off the boat and have taken her in his arms.

Nell, after the restraints at Broadacres, is thoroughly charmed with the freedom of the trip, and felt as if she would like to sail on forever. Hazel enjoys it also, but solely owing to its having brought her the companionship of Nell, and for the elixir she hopes it holds for her babe; but in the privacy of the large, airy stateroom, occupied by herself and Nell, she confides to the latter that she wishes Beauvais—kind and attentive though he has been—had left them at Smith's Falls, and returned to Ottawa, instead of, as now, making the round trip to Kingston; she little dreaming what kind of sentinel he is over her weak husband.

"Hazel," said Nell suddenly, "did you ever meet solid Donald, as that dear old man, Colonel Gray, dubbed McLenn, when you visited Veteran Lodge, before you were joined by the Church Prayer Book to my bacchanal brother-in-law."

"Please, Nell, don't call him names."

"Very well, dear, I won't, only bacchanal; it has a foreign sound, but go on, tell me," and she settles herself, tailor-fashion, on a rug, in its strap, which lies piled up with some other luggage on the floor.

"Yes, I met him three times," and Nell, quickly observant, notices that she lingers on the words while undressing baby, as if recalling the past.

"Three times," she echoed, musingly, drawing the gold pins from her blonde hair, and shaking it loose over her bare shoulders in their ivory whiteness. "When and where, Madame Leary?" she says, with latent interest, admiring the while the sweet picture Hazel, in her pretty robe de chambre, makes as she bends over baby at her breast, and which Beauvais is feasting his eyes upon through a small opening in the shutter of their window, which, in their innocence, they have not quite closed to the pure air from the water, little dreaming of the sensuous gaze and hot breath they are the victims of.

"You remember, Nell, dear," and the sweet voice of Hazel has a sad cadence, weighted as it is with the memory of her conversation with Beauvais in the bow of the boat, "we left our dear old London home in the autumn for Broadacres; I, almost immediately, going to the Greys at Ottawa. On the first and second evenings after my arrival Pat called, on the third evening—Mr. McLean, with Mr. Louis and his wife, having dined at Veteran Lodge, Colonel Gray and Mary Gunn making up a game at whist, Mr. McLean fell to my lot, when we had a long and pleasant chat; pleasant, as I remember, though somewhat grave; grave, though sympathetically in tone, for I was sad at parting with you, darling, and at the strange harshness of uncle Carew to myself, not to speak of what had preceded it in dear papa's death, while McLean was feeling grieved at the increasing weakness of his old friend, Mr. Quirk. Our next meeting was at the dépôt, whither Mary Gunn and I had gone to see Colonel Grey off, on business for the department, to Montreal. Mr. Quirk, pale and very weak, was *en route* for Bermuda, McLean with him—we spoke a few words to them wishing them *bon voyage*. Mr. Quirk was a dear old man, and we felt quite distressed about him; and as you have heard, he never lived to return. At the close of the winter, McLean re-

turned to the city, and one night we met in the gallery of the House ; there was a great crush to hear, I remember, the stirring debate on Trade with the U. S. A. ; but McLean managed somehow to join us, sitting between Mary Gunn and myself. Pat, only managing to get within several yards of us, however, succeeded in passing to me a pencilled slip requesting me to wait for him at the entrance gate, which I did, McLean having asked me very politely if he could be an additional escort, as we were going to walk to Sandy Hill, and Mr. Lisle, Avignon and Colonel Grey were already with us. On my hesitating, he had just time to ask me, very hurriedly, if it was true that I was engaged to be married to Mr. Leary ? I had scarcely time to frame the word 'yes,' when Pat, overtaking us, and taking immediate possession of myself, McLean, lifting his hat, was gone, thinking, I suppose, he would be *de trop*, as Mary was so well escorted. So you see, dear, it has been since my marriage that I have learned to know and like Mary Gunn's Scotch friend."

"Weel, weel, as Betsy says, whan the ways o' Providence puzzle her," said Nell, her violet eyes fixed on the sweet face of Hazel ; "and then poor old Bet scratches her wig, which I can only do prospectively ; but from what you have told me, sister mine, of the cat-green orbs, I should like to slap the Fates right in the middle of their ugly meddling old faces."

Hazel smiled indulgently at the daring upturned face, when, a grave thought chasing the smile and bringing a tremor to her lips, she says :

"Miss Belleville says that 'tis Pat, who should quarrel with Fate, dear ; and oh ! it grieves me so. You see, when I said yes to his proposal, it was because uncle Carew had told me that the quicker I ranged myself the quicker he would be pleased, and I was really grateful to Pat."

"Grateful ! it's my bacchanal brother-in-law should be grateful. Very well, I won't call him that if you will save that salt water that is running to waste, and spoiling your eyes, save it until you see me grateful—forsooth, to H. R. for marring me. Yes, I give you leave, nay invite you to drown me in your tears, if you live to see the day that I, Nell Carew, am grateful to the man I honor, with my hand—grateful ! Phew ! Rats ! Great Scott ! and everything else—I wish the ancient

Parcae had shook those two men up in a bag and given you your choice. It was the very least they could do, mean old things. Talk about old-fashioned politeness, had they had as much as would fit under a nineteenth century postage stamp, they'd have given you your choice," she says in breathless anger.

At this the gay old boy from the other side of the shutter gave one or two notes of an audible chuckle, which are, however, to him a note of alarm, so that, with cat-like tread he moves up to the bow.

"Nell dear, don't speak so loud, I thought I heard some one outside the shutter," and she draws her pretty night gown closer, as she glances at the green blind nervously.

"All imagination sister; this child is inheritor of the ears of Midas, as far as hearing is concerned, though, *en verité*, my pretty little ears of pink, in the language of H. R., heard but the echo of my own oration, and besides," she says, consulting the jewelled watch in her Parisian bracelet on her bare arm, "the curfew bell has rung, everyone on board is on shelf *en route* to sleep-land, yourself and baby being the only intellectual passengers on the boat, as you have proved by attending my lecture; but here goes for the bolt of the shutter. Oh Hazel, lay Maston in the cupboard, and come and look out, for in the language of some dandy poet:

"'Tis a beautiful night and the stars shine bright,
And the moon o'er the water plays."

"Yes, isn't it divine?" whispers Hazel softly, and both pretty heads lean out, drinking in the pure air from the water, and at the same time the beauty of the vaulted heavens, with its myriads of star-lit lamps, the moon throwing her silver mantle over all; the girls' arms are thrown around each other as they lean forth, impressed with the beauty of the night, the silence, too, save for the musical plowing of the waves and the few murmured words coming in wavelets from the bow and stern, where some men sit quietly smoking.

"Nell dear, you won't lie down to sleep and still harbor unkind thoughts of poor Pat with this scene in your memory, with God so near," and she kisses the beautiful, defiant little face.

"I don't quite know, Hazel, but I *do* know that I hate that black and tan person you call Miss Belleville, and I'll go on hating her, too. God says we are to hate the devil, and when I saw her I thought to myself, 'Oh, yes, you are one of those women at whose touch honor withers.' As for Pat, for your sake and my own, as I shall be nearly always with you after I enter the ringed circle, I shall be nice to him, always provided," and bolting the shutter, at which the gay old boy hearing again creeps along and lends an ear, "Yes, Nell, always provided you don't ask too much, dear."

"No, Hazel, only this, that as we are told something about keeping the door of our own lips, I shall be sweet to Pat, always provided he won't force his kisses upon me; for all men, as well as Pat, who have breaths perfumed so, should be forwarded to Japan to learn to salaam, *versus* kiss, and on their return, perhaps, I'd permit them to kiss my toe—booted."

And so she rattles away, while, with loving fingers, Hazel unakes a soft braid of the beautiful golden hair hanging outside the *robe de nuit* of our pretty Nell, and, as she chatters, Hazel's thoughts are busy of how on two occasions, herself unseen, unheard, she had come upon a woman in "whose might had been a man's undoing," and of where her "weakness had been his strength," the pair thinking no harm of a kiss.

"Hazel of the cat-green orbs," says Nell, in slowly solemn tones, "if you had given me Scotch Donald for a brother-in-law I bet my shoes—Burt's at that—he'd never have known I have a fairly kissable mouth, nor would he have cared, even though, in the language of H. R., it is a cupid's bow."

At this, Beauvais, on the other side of the shutter, muttered a curse, long and deep.

"You speak without knowledge, dear. Mr. McL—ever thought of me for a single instant other than as a friend, and I am quite sure it is that," she says, feelingly, "but I know who he does care for, though this is a secret. Nell, for I feel quite sure she has refused him, and I don't know how any woman could," she says, innocently, at which time he bites his lips in rage, to prevent his emphatic language bursting forth.

"Life is just a mud puddle, Hazel, and we have no light, so good-night; watch me mount to the top shelf."

"Just one little prayer, Nell, dear, before you go. We will say the Lord's Prayer together as we used to do in our dear old home in the Forest City."

In their berths, neither move for fear of disturbing the other, Nell, too angry for Hazel's spoiled life, to sleep until hours had emptied into the past, while the pillow of Hazel is wet with her tears, but baby in her arms softly sleeping seems to bring to his mother the angel of rest, and ere long, she, too, falls into the peaceful arms of Somnus.

Beauvais, on retiring to his state-room, literally "communes with himself, and is still;" the result of his cogitation being that the following morning sees him walking into the good graces of Nell by his untiring forethought for the comfort of Hazel, feeding the little blonde beauty with ices, bonbons, and lemonade. Leaving Hazel and baby on the promenade deck, snug and luxurious, in a reclining chair and rugs from the captain's snuggery, the wise old boy then climbing with our pretty Nell to the hurricane deck, throwing the dice on the praises of Hazel's devotedness to an unworthy husband, won Nell's trust in him, so much so that on the "Rideau Belle" reaching the City of the Isles, Kingston, at 2 p.m. on Saturday, she openly expressed her regret at parting, thinking he returned immediately, allowing her taper fingers to remain in his fat paw until he had tired squeezing.

"Take care of Mrs. Leary," he says, for the fortieth time, as he holds baby, sees to their luggage, and has his heavy eyes on the sweet face of Hazel at the same time.

"I wonder if Betsy will be here to meet us. Uncle Carew said she should come on from the Sandbanks," says Nell, eagerly, as they steamed into the dock. "Yes, there she is," she cried, and just aching to get a peep at Miss Hazel's baby. "Do you see her Hazel?"

"Yes, how glad she looks, dear old Bet," she says, waving her handkerchief, "but she is in the soup until she gets a sight of baby Maston, wave him at her, Mr. Beauvais, do," cries Nell.

"But I don't know which she is in such a sea of heads and faces, parasols and what nots," he says, from behind Nell, not looking, seeing nothing but the gladness of recognition in the sweet face of the woman he has a passion for; jealous, too,

of her gladness when he is furious at fate that he is obliged to leave her. "Tell me how I shall single her out—is she like Mrs. Leary or yourself—is she kin to you? I don't see any one as lovely as either of you—excuse the point blank compliment—how am I to see her?"

"I should say you are all at sea," says Nell, proudly, "when you ask if the servant of a Carew is kin to them," then lapsing into merriment, continuing. "Dost see that bean-pole woman done in plaid, with a tartan shawl on her arm which is destined to make a neat parcel of Miss Hazel's infant. See, Monsieur Beauvais, she has elbowed her way to the gangway. Now there! the woman with the plaster-of-paris cheek and unicorn bonnet."

"Yes, yes, to be sure I see; and suppose your Uncle Carew has forwarded her to keep the young fellows at bay, and you intact for somebody," he says, smilingly.

"If I thought that, I'd leave them in the soup, by giving H. R.—an acquaintance of mine, M. Beauvais—the slip, y'es, the slip," and as she speaks the diamond ring flashes merrily as she waves to Betsy, and Beauvais smiles, as he reads in the glittering gems the name of Rice. In a merry mood Nell now throws a soft bon-bon at the upturned face of Betsy, when missing her mark, it went to stay on the throat of a good-looking young fellow, in a yachting suit, who, with an upward glance at our pretty Nell in her fetching blue boating costume, lifts his cap, which is shaped like a peanut shell, tassel on top, and smiles, as extracting the soft candy from his sun-warm throat, he conveys it to his mouth which is trimmed with a very new moustache. He now holds the cap towards her in a comical manner.

"Oh Nell, don't laugh, or he may grow impertinent," whispers Hazel.

"I can't refrain, sister mine, with the face of Betsy so full of pain; see, she is reading him a lecture on having literally lifted his eyes to me, Nell Carew. We might now, in the language of the Toronto police force, 'move on,' and down, as the crowd are thinning out, Mr. Beauvais, though I positively," she says, turning her blonde head over her shoulder to his ponderous form, mean nothing personal."

Beauvais laughs good-humoredly, seeing them to the hotel 'Frontenac.' Betsy, taking immediate possession of baby Leary, divides her time, while pacing the corridor, between hugging and cooing to him and in taking peeps into the dining room at her heart's idol, our pretty Nell, who with Hazel and M. Beauvais eat of an appetizing and plentiful luncheon.

"When does the 'Hero' start for Picton, Mr. Beauvais?" asks Hazel, smilingly. "You see, I take it for granted, you are aware, as a perfectly reliable guide-book, I can recommend you."

"Then may I advertise myself as such, in the 'Whig' and 'News,' and to ladies only," he says playfully, neglecting his plate of scalloped oysters, and leaning towards her, "and will you give me a good character, for I am sure I have played the saint ever since we left the Capital?"

"Now Hazel," broke in Nell, "don't give him any taffy; he owns to having only played the part of saint, and that only since leaving the Capital?"

"Nell Carew!"

"Well, *ma chere*, the world is a stage, and our guide has played the saint for two whole days. Next—the 'Hero'; when do we leave for Picton, most erudite of guides?"

"At 3:30 p. m., most cruel of teases," he says, turning his heavy eyes full on her beautiful little face; again leaning towards Hazel, says, "but Mrs. Leary, if I might suggest, I should say it will be wise in you to remain here over Sunday. I find the steamer 'Norseman' makes the run and return down to Alexandria Bay on to-morrow."

"On Sunday, Mr. Beauvais! I never make trips on that day. See Nell smiling, she will say you are rapidly allowing the mantle of sainthood to fall from your shoulders. No, no, we must leave for Picton this afternoon, though I am sure this hotel is very comfortable, and the rest would be very enjoyable," she says, waveringly.

"And don't forget your boy," said Beauvais. It would be another tonic for him; take my advice and stay over, if only for baby's sake."

"This child—no, Hazel, don't forget this one, who promises not to lift her eyes from the tract the Salvation army soldier gave her, unless she feels curvature of her spinal column coming on."

"Do stay over," pleads Beauvais, with a longing desire to have her with him, as Betsy will relieve her of the care of the small, and Nell will flit about finding amusement in the admiration she excites, in the fun she takes in the appearance of a motley throng, rather than in the beautiful scenery, and the gay old boy anticipates with passionate joy the watching, unobserved, the sweet face of Hazel in a glow of delight as they

Float down the shining river,
The river of the Isles,
On the gallant steamer 'Norseman',
With sweet Hazel by his side.

But *l'homme propose*, and when he suggests this desire of his to remain with them until their departure for Picton, Hazel takes alarm saying quickly :

"Oh, no, not for worlds! you see, the letter Pat promised would meet me at Kingston is not forthcoming." Then leaning towards him in her earnestness, in nervous tones she says. "Oh, please, you must return at once to Ottawa; I mean of course," she adds sweetly, as she pushes back the light brown curls on her forehead, to look up at him dependently, "of course, I mean I wish you would. I am so anxious until I hear. You say the clerk says there are positively no letters awaiting us from Ottawa?"

"None, so he tells me, but dear Mrs. Leary remember that no news is good news," not confiding in her that he himself is the recipient of a missive from Miss P. Levilie, in which she glows over the fact of Pat's semi-stagnant state, and of how at a river party got up by Hazel's *bete-noir* Madame Vilaine, she and Pat are canoe companions, on the evening, too, of the day Mrs. Leary and party had floated away on the steamer "Rideau Belle," of the champagne and ices at Hull, the return to supper at Madame Vilaine's in the small hours of the summer dawn, concluding her elegant epistle by recording the fact that they were all quite "spiffy."

And now the wise old boy, with his eyes still on the sweet face opposite him, thinking to forge yet another link in her chain of gratitude, says :

"I'll tell you what we'll do, enter into a compact; you promise to remain over Sunday for the water trip, it will do you

and the small chap a great deal of good, and I shall return at once to Ottawa by rail, too, being more expeditious."

"Oh, thank you ever so much," she says, with a sigh of relief, "but will you give up the delightful water trip?"

"Yes, for you : you are anxious, and so, water avaunt ! and for the smut of the fire-horse of civilization !" he says, well pleased with himself, "and rest assured I shall telegraph you as to how things are immediately on my arrival at Ottawa."

And seeing that comfortable rooms are placed at their disposal up stairs in the spacious reception rooms, he contrives a *côte-à-côte* with Hazel on the best method to adopt in dealing with her weak husband.

"I feel sometimes," she says, sadly, "as if I should not have left home. I am, I think, some slight check on poor Pat."

"But, Mrs. Leary, are you never to think of yourself? you have had a long time, you must recuperate ; rest assured that I shall watch him and constantly report, and now I suppose I had better be off to see about my train. Take good care of yourself, dear Mrs. Leary."

And she does not notice, though he feels, her slim fingers in his fat palm, in his somewhat protracted leave-taking, protracted, to her, for as she afterwards says to Nell, she would like to have telegraphed him back to the capital ; all too short to him for his capacious desire, which longs for a perpetual stay.

CHAPTER VII.

TRIFLING, TEASING, TRUSTING, TRYSTING.

Such a musical burr burr, and whirr whirr
Of rosy-lipped summer-girl sympathy.

HE north side of the Music Hall which stands in the extensive grounds surrounding the Surf Beach House on the cape which juts out from the Sandbanks, lies partly in shadow, the tall trees, screening off the hotel

lights, as also the electric lights on the lawn—they, the latter, only coming to this dusky spot in fitful flashes. On the platform which is built outside the music hall, and which also runs around this shadowed north side, are benches; but here only one is placed outside the small window, hence it is a meet spot for observance unseen by those in the interior. One is complete master of the situation, if, as on this, the sixth evening after the arrival of Hazel Leary, and Nell Carew, a dance is on the tapis, the floor being cleared and the benches all placed by the walls which the numerous guests from the hotel and cottages soon fill to repletion, one seated in the outer dusk may peer between the heads and shoulders, nay, may even mingle his breath with theirs without detection, the stealthy watcher being concealed—wrapped in the mantle of a summer night.

A black thing is crouched there now, having the form of a man of medium height, and by that flash of electric light one sees a pair of detective eyes set close together in a false, mean-looking face, free of beard, whisker or moustache; an old young man, crafty in expression, his dark tweed suit being unobtrusive in style, his linen, though *a la mode* in cut, is unsavory. So intent is he in his stealthy watch that he is a trifle careless of an occasional glimmer of light from the music room playing upon his face, but with some instinctive feeling which many are conscious of, of some unseen object being near one, a lady, in trifling chat with her neighbour immediately inside the window, suddenly turns her head over her shoulder to meet the gaze of the stealthy outside watcher. With the exclamation of Oh! the person moves away to the gloom of some monster oak and towering pine. Her late partner in a polka says, mirthfully:

"One would think you had caught sight of a ghost, bat or owl, you ladies are a bundle of nerves."

At which bright Mrs. James, of Belleville, retorts:

"Don't malign my sex through me, sir, or I shan't pilot you through this waltz. I might well start, with some horrid man outside, why he nearly had his head on my shoulder when I looked around; if I had been the magnet of attraction the man would have been more bearable, but his eyes were meanly fixed

on either Mrs. Leary or Nell Carew at the other end of the room."

"Yes, I call that down-right mean," said McCullough, of Toronto, laughingly, "to shoulder himself on to you merely to look at some other women."

But even as he twirls his gay partner to the music of the *toujours ou jamais* waltz, even while whispering soft nothings into her ear, with fleeting glances at Hazel and Nell, he feels that had he been Solomon, with capacious arms full of wives, he would have hungered for just two more.

Pretty, sweet and magnetic they are; Hazel gowned in tawny ecru and golden-brown pongee silk, her sweet upturned face bright with animation, for Mrs. Louis, of Ottawa, is beside her, who has brought good news of Pat, steady on his pins, having dined with her and her husband the day previous, so she feels at rest, though mutinous withal, for Mrs. Louis has just whispered, behind that convenient screen of secrets—her fan:

"It is excessively imprudent in you to dance while away from your husband."

At which, with a vivid blush, which causes Bell, of Montreal, though with already many strings to his bow, to wonder if he couldn't manage just one more; while Hazel, hesitating, though having said her yea, on the sweet notes of music filling the air, her pretty feet aching to move in rhythm, before she is aware she has taken the offered arm, answered smile with smile, and is treading a measure with supple grace.

The floor is now a maze of couples, with now and then, then and now, a collision; this time Hazel is almost whirled off her feet in her partner's endeavor to land her safely.

"Excusez," says Hazel, breathlessly, as they jostle Nell, who stands chatting with two gentlemen, who both claim her.

"I crave your pardon," says Spry, flushed and heated, who runs in among them with gay Mrs. James, of Belleville, on his arm. "I trust I have not broken any bones, Philbee. What a whirl. Phew!"

"I should say so," laughed Philbee, "a little reeling world it is; take pity on me, Miss Carew."

"A fine! a fine!" cries Eva Tims, waltzing past; "no Miss or Mr. among the festive 400."

Philbee laughs, showing a set of white, even teeth, nature's gift, too, in a clean, well-shaped mouth, adorned with what the girls had dubbed, a dove of a brown moustache.

"Come, Nell," Philbee continues, coaxingly, "Moore is non-suited, send him to the wall, he would make quite a unique and handsome ornament; the girls will admire him perhaps even more than they do the rolling pins and other articles of *vertu* they hang up."

"We might even trim you with ribbons, Burt," laughs Nell, "how happy would I be with either if t'other dear charmer were *non est*. You, Roderick Philbee, plead that I promised to dance with you when Dan Tucker played this 'Queen of my Heart' waltz. You, Burt, swear I owe you the third and fourth waltz of the evening, *tres bien*. I have no idea of the time, so down on bended knee; kneel as you stand, right and left of me, and consult the watches in the toes of my French slippers; if not yet nine, I am yours, Burt, if after, I belong to Rod.; but come out to the platform, else we shall be swept under the benches and into the parlor of the spider, minus a bid. Now down on your bended knees."

The watches in her slipper-toes telling 9.15, Philbee rises triumphant, flushed and happy, just as Messrs. Mack and Spindle, the proprietors of the hotel, saunter up, Spindle making a full stop, saying, jocosely:

"Say, Miss Carew! you are robbing the other young ladies. You have too many strings to your bow."

"Or my shoes, Uncle John," she says, smartly, after the manner of the younger guests at the Sandbanks. "You, too, are gallant enough to have offered to tie them had you come along a minute sooner. Watch what perfect time we'll keep."

"A bewitching little time-keeper," whispers Philbee, as, almost too happy for words, they join the throng of waltzers.

"Say, is that a case, Burt?" asks Spindle, a glow of interest on his good-natured face.

"Yes, it's all up with Philbee; but that old wasp, Betsy, says Nell is engaged to some confounded fellow at Toronto."

"Is that so? Now that is hard on you young fellows. Say, don't they look handsome together, eh?" he says, admiringly, as he supports one door-post, Burt Moore taking the other.

Of a truth many admiring and envious glances follow the pair. One would look far and wide ere meeting as handsome and well-built a young fellow as Philbee, well-bred, well-conditioned, popular, and with a proud, handsome face, clad in becoming white flannels, a crimson silk tie under the turned down collar, with Gordon scarf, the same shade around his waist.

The little blonde beauty, Nell, coquettishly attired in white china-silk gown, trimmed with plaided surah in old rose, floats along in a dream of happiness, epicurean-like, dwelling on an all too-delightful present, banishing thoughts of what the very near future has in store for her, which is becoming a hideous nightmare.

"But say, Burt, for a fact, is she engaged?" asks Spindle.

"Nell does not say so; but come and have a ginger ale. It's tantalous punishment looking at Philbee in possession. I must tell you of an amusing incident that occurred on Swift's wharf, at Kingston, *re* Nell's engagement."

"Yes, come along, Burt. I want a good laugh, and you will be in time for the next dance."

In the blue-ribbon bar he tells Spindle of the pelting by Nell of the bon-bon, which we already know, and we now recognize Burt Moore as the wearer of the striped blue and white coat and peanut shell cap, as also the acquaintance of Pickford.

"Yes, I'll tell you what it is, Uncle John, Betsy, standing on the wharf, jerked my pants, the seat of them at that; by George she gave me a nip, too, causing me to look around at she as ugly as a mud fence, with her black patch, and said, in her East Glasgow voice: 'Young mon, ye maunna daur lift your bold een to my young laddy yonder, she isna for the like o' ye; sae bold, sae giddy, she is wearin' o' a ring fra' a rich lad in a civilized city, nae like this sma' place, fill't wi' barbarians, an' she is goin' to wed before lang.'"

"For a fact!" exclaims Spindle. "Well, as I said before, it's hard on you young fellows, but you can't all have her, and if I were in your nobby suit, I'd console myself with Miss Tims, she's an out-and-out summer girl, who don't care a button about any of you, though she said to me the other day: 'Isn't Philbee just divine, for a fact, she did!'"

"I wish he'd go to Salt Lake, and take his harem with him," says Moore, a little sulkily.

"But," laughs Spindle, "the Saints are finding the women too many for them."

"Little wonder, Uncle John, with millinery so high," but his laugh dies at birth, as he stops short at the north side of the Music Hall, long-legged Spindle, and his good-natured laugh being by this time a-far, while Burt Moore, slipping into the shadowed north side, out of the glare of lights from the windows on the east front, gazes into the gloom of the trees, a look of puzzled discomfiture on his boyish face, as he muses :

"Yes, the mean skunk, he is sneaking about again, I can't make out who he is watching, unless it be Philbee ; what if there should be something scaley about Philbee," he thinks, giving way to the pressure of the cloven foot ; "if so, and the detectives are after him, my love for that stunning little girl, Carew, might score me a point ;" but with a boy's innate love of fair play, he shakes himself free from the tempting suspicion, and cloaks himself anew with a desire to get out of that sneaking form what his business is in thus prowling about the hotel and promontory at dusk. What, if I am right in my surmise that it is Pickford, all I have to go on is the decidedly shadowy resemblance, and that he was always a bit of a sneak, together with the fact of his having written me about this place. A sneak is invariably a coward, and hang me if I won't shake his business out of him before I am much older."

At this juncture a girl's scream falls on the air. A conflagration ! a burst of flame in the middle of the great lawn, when its opposing element causes the blaze from the lamp fallen from a tall pole on the top of a summer-house to splitter splutter and die.

Yes, our pretty Nell has had a narrow escape, and in the electric light Philbee shows pale as death. What if it had fallen upon the lovely golden hair—had laid its destroying element upon that beautiful little face, which, but for the mad ding crowd he would pillow in his arms ; but thank Providence it has fallen to her side, though bruising her right hand, which is painful, and spoiling her pretty silken skirts with its flame

and oil, which in a flash has been deadened by Philbee's nobby coat.

"Here comes the swarm," cries Nell, a quiver in her tones.

"I feel anything but gregarious just now."
"I wish the whole bitter-sweet gang were in Paradise, and that this was a desert island, save we two," he says, looking up, for he is on bended knee tenderly wrapping his flannel coat about her little scorched hand.

"You are a darling, Rod., but what would H. R. say to my benediction," she says, in somewhat hysterical tones.

"H. R., be hanged! I must talk to you seriously to-morrow, little one. Say you will meet me at the Point in the morning at 9. The style will be our tryst. Jove! how my heart jumped when that lamp fell, but here they are upon us."

"Look, Rod.! Oh, he is gone. A nasty mean man sneaked from behind the —, but here they come," and she makes an effort to be calm, saying:

"You are a dandy, Uncle John, and all of you a heterogeneous mass. I might have been ready to pop into a cremation urn but for Rod."

"For a fact!" exclaims Spindle, whom the younger guests dub Uncle John.

"Yes, Miss Carew has had a hair-breadth escape," says Philbee, in unsteady tones "but bore up like a brick."

"Nell, darling," cries Hazel, flying from her partner, "come at once to Idle Bower, and Betsy will save your poor hand from disfigurement. Oh! whose coat? Ah, I see! Mr. Philbee's, how kind of him."

"A tender passage," whispers Tims to Dr. Helen.

And one would think, after the dreamy solitude of a few minutes ago, which had proved so seductive to Philbee, that all the bees, birds and butterflies at the Banks had gathered themselves together; such a musical burr, burr, and whirr, whirr, of rosy-lipped summer girl sympathy.

"How could a shooting star do it, you goose?" says Edna to Spry.

"Fancy coal oil and diamonds," says another.

"But the coal oil will prevent a scar," cries Dr. Helen.

"Oh, Nell, your pretty frock is spoiled," moans Rhita Tims.

"What about the dear little hand?" says Mr. Bell.

"I'd have kissed it to make it well," laughs McCullough, "had Ariminda said me yea."

"If Philbee hadn't been dazed by other gleams he'd have seen it coming," cries another.

"Something must have knocked the pole," said Spindle; "a night-hawk, perhaps."

"Yes," breaks in Nell, excitedly, "a night-hawk in the form of a man. I told Rod. I saw a thing sneaking just here," and she goes to the side of the summer-house immediately under the pole.

"For a fact; a miscreant hand bending it so, would send the coal oil lamp just where you and Philbee stood; but say! we have no tramps at the Banks, so it must have been some ugly night bird," said Spindle.

Philbee, standing somewhat aloof, his arms folded, his brain and heart in a whirl, scarcely hears what Burt Moore tells him of the fellow he has seen skulking about.

"Yes, Moore," he says, moving nearer to Hazel and Nell, "we must look into this matter; this might have been a serious accident. The next time you see the fellow, hunt me up, and we'll get him to Bloomfield double quick, and hand him over to the authorities, to lick into better shape."

"All right, Philbee;" if you hadn't been preoccupied by that little Circe, Nell, you'd have spotted him yourself."

"Mrs. Leary," says Philbee, bending down his handsome face to her ear, "do, I implore you, get Miss Carew down to your cottage and out of this crowd, her hand should be attended to at once."

"Come, Nell dear, to Idle Bower, don't delay; Betsy must dress your hand; you come, too, Mr. Philbee, for your coat, unless you will leave it with Betsy to renew for you; come, Doctor Helen, there's a dear."

"Mrs. Spindle can supply you with pounds of cotton batting, Mrs. Leary," says Spindle, eagerly.

"Thank you," says Hazel, over her shoulder, "but Betsy has a curiosity shop down at Idle Bower."

"Good night, good night," calls Nell. "Good night, saccharine conglomeration o' lads an' lassies."

On reaching Idle Bower, a small white, neat painted structure, with red and yellow facings, fresh and snug, cool and in

viting, a story and a half in height, a trim veranda to the east front on which are white rattan rockers decorated by Hazel with knots of yellow and red ribbons.

"Come in," says Hazel, "I know Betsy has some of her famous hot lemonade and macaroons, and you will hear her report of Nell's hand."

Mrs. Louis, who is a guest at the cot, enters prim and starched, followed by the others, to drink to the prompt return of beauty to the hand of our pretty Nell.

Betsy is greatly frightened as she takes an early doze by the cradle of baby Maston, Kerry, the Irish setter, at her feet, as Nell pokes her hand, enveloped in the coat smelling of coal oil, under her thin nose.

"Here, Betsy, is a lame hand for you to cure, and we'll drink your health in a right guid willie waught made o' blue ribbon lemons."

"Dinna tak' aff the coat, Miss Nell, until I ha'e the cotton battin' wi' the oil ready."

Up-stairs in Nell's fairy-like bed-room, which looks out through the trees on to the cool breeze-laden West Lake, Betsy attends to her heart's idol.

"Thank the gude God it is nae worse, dearie," she says, fervently, "hadna' Mr. Philbee been nigh wi' his cont ye wud hae' been marked; but what wud the master or young Mr. Rice, say to a' the lads ye ha'e about ye, Miss Nell; it frights me to think o' they."

"Don't name them to me, Betsy, thoughts of them take the joy out of me, and I am so happy I could scream for joy," and she does give three or four shrill cries, then the tears come relieving her excited feelings, though alarming Betsy, and bringing Hazel flying up stairs.

"They are all gone, Nell dear, they feared your hand pained in the dressing, but I knew better, sissie, and that those soprano-like notes were not of pain. Betsy knows all about the accident, I see by her face, so it's my turn to have you now. Please go down-stairs, Betsy, and mount guard over baby Maston."

"Where is the chicken?" whispers Nell. "Oh Bet!" she calls, "please give Poll her supper, I am so glad Mrs. Louis has brought her from Ottawa."

"She has gone back to the music hall with the others for our fur capes and her own shawl, Philbee has returned coatless—next door to Rollickers Dene, and heartless in one sense, dear," she says, sitting beside her on the neat white bed, "you are making sad havoc with those young fellows' hearts, my pretty sister."

"But what does it signify, when they are all in the soup," replies Nell regretfully, when, her mischievous mood taking her in possession, she horrifies Betsy, who is descending the stairs, by saying, "I only wish H. R. was in the soup, and that I could marry all those boys at once. Let me see, and taking one of Hazel's slim hands in her left hand, she says, counting off the taper fingers, "I should like jolly Reggie Tims for breakfast and to pilot me through my swim; next, I should like Burt Moore for dinner and a flirtation row on the lake, until our primitive tea-time; when all toggled up pretty, I should just love," says the little witch softly, "to have Rod. to waltz with all evening," and the violet eyes take a dreamy look Hazel has never seen there before.

"But, Nell dear, do you think it is quite fair to young Philbee to flirt so remarkably with him. I can assure you there is many a lifting of eyebrow by the Primtons, and that set, on your dancing so often, or sitting out dances with him; but by far the worst of it is, dear, that you may grow fond of him, and your marriage with H. R. coming off so soon."

"Well, you are married, Hazel of the winning ways, as I overheard Bell say to two or three other men at bowls to-day, and I know they all think you just too sweet for anything—but themselves."

"Nonsense, Nell, men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for a June fancy."

"*Tren bien*, I am just Rod's summer girl; think, Hazel, what a contrast I have to spend my winters with," and something very like a tear is brushed surreptitiously away. "Ah me, ah me, Hazel of the cut-green orbs, life is just one big mud puddle, and

'The life of some is worse than death,
'For fate oft a high wall raises.'

at which there is a momentary silence, the thoughts of each flying back to the lawn at Veteran Lodge, and again they

hear the tenor voice of McLean, and Nell again feels the inward conviction of Donald's secret love for Hazel.

"But Hazel, your eyes have a suspicious glister in them, so this child will give you a laughing crumb. Doctor Helen told me she heard a Primpton say to another that she was sure from my extravagance in dress that I have the dollar, and that this is the reason the boys run after me."

"Oh Nell, what a mean thing to say; one would think that at this lovely spot this outing with nature would act as a tonic to one's higher inner self. I do believe some people's souls are so meanly proportioned they could dance a gallop in a peanut shell."

"Right you are, Hazel, but I don't deceive any of the boys. I tell them all that I sell peanuts and cigarettes at corner Queen and Yonge-streets, Toronto, and that I buy my pretty frocks second-hand."

"You young terror!" laughs Hazel. "Well, I suppose they must look after their own hearts; you can't go about ticketed 'betrotthed.' Listen! a knock, oh, it is one of your slain, I forgot to tell you Mr. Philbee said he would come just to the door to get your rings to clean for you."

"All right, I fly in my 'cute little rainbow-hued dressing gown."

"But, Nell," asks Hazel hurriedly, "how came your betrothal ring to be on your right hand; it is awfully spoiled."

"Thereby hangs a tale," says Nell guiltily, the fact being Philbee had begged her to wear it no longer on her left hand."

At the door they have a few treasured words.

"I'll make a pillow of my coat to-night, sweet; remember our tryst, the style. From there a lovely stroll through the trees down to the Point and into the smallest cove down among the boulders, this dear little hand pained you when it was dressed: your cries pierced my heart, little one."

"I did not cry with pain, Rod., perhaps I shall tell you tomorrow what made me," she says, with a new, sweet shyness, "though I ought not to meet you, but I will."

"You will, sweet! God grant that I may hear those words again to the little questions I will ask you in the morning."

"Go now, Rod., here is Mrs. Louis, and she will deliver an oration on the impropriety of my dressing-gown."

But in three bounds she escapes her in her own bedroom, little thinking that as she rolls up the pretty blind to the top of the window, to let the stars look in above the peek-a-boo, that a nasty eye gloats over her sylph-like movements, that a man of medium height has climbed a tree a few yards from her window, commanding a view of her room.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GOLDEN JULY MAIDEN.

"And now with firm, yet soft insistence,
The summer girl shines down the distance."

THE following day at the first flush of a glorious roseate dawn, the long-legged spirit of the Sandbanks, up and doing, taps gently at the open door of Idle Bower, when Betsy, as ever neatly attired, comes forward, twine hammock in hand which her busy fingers mend, for baby Maston must not miss his swing under the boughs of some great tree, near the invigorating air from the water.

"Good morning, Betsy," says Spindle smilingly, handing a small parcel and letters.

"Gude mornin', sir, a braw day sir, fra' Ottawa I see, an' for Mistress Leary. I didna ken," she says suspiciously, "ye hae a mail sae early in the morn, sir. This is Mistress Leary's birthday, an' she look't for letters yestreen."

"For a fact, Betsy! and but that I received a few lines from Mrs. Gunn giving me strict directions to hold these over till this morning, Mrs. Leary should have had them last night. Say, Betsy, tell Mrs. Louis the trap will be ready to take her to Pieton at 8:30; young man Hicks goes in with the mail."

"Betsy!" calls Hazel softly, from her room adjoining, a pretty room, its walls of stained pine, dressed with fantastic forest picturing by the artistic brush of Nell. "Betsy! what is it, what did Mr. Spindle want?"

"He fetched these fra' Ottawa, Miss Hazel, a woe bit box and letters, which you should hae had yestreen, hadna Mistress Gunn writ him a line to keep them his ain sel' til this morn, an' I wish ye a lang life an' a happy ane, Mistress Hazel, an' here is a wee bit parcel o' socks, please."

In which Hazel finds six pairs soft, white, Andalusian socks for baby, and three pairs black silk stockings for her own pretty limbs. It is a kindly and withal useful gift, and with smiles the pleased recipient turns to thank the donor, but she has vanished, and not wishing to arouse Mrs. Louis, who is asleep in the adjoining room, with a smile of expectancy on her sweet face, sitting up in her snowy bed, moving cautiously, lest she wakes her sleeping babe, the sweet-scented breath of morning coming to her through the window curtains, she takes the wrapper off the small sealed box, addressed by Mrs. Gunn, which discloses to view a silver bracelet, on which, instead of the orthodox Skaksperian quotation are the, to her, familiar words, "Pure as the snow, than morning's dawn more bright." A smile of pleasure comes to her eyes and mouth as she remembers of how at an At-Home, at Veteran Lodge, Donald McLean had sang an old song of his mother's, commencing with those words; and of how afterwards, he had told her she was the exemplification of those words to him. He must have given this song, she thinks, to Mary Gunn, who so has chosen to have them engraved.

And, now with a woman's eye for adornment, she allows the lace frill of her open night gown sleeve to fall from her pretty arm, clasping the silver band on, holdin' it in different positions admiringly, showing her appreciation of the pretty gift by pressing her red mouth to it, saying softly, "I shall think of you both when I wear it."

With hasty fingers and a look of anxious eagerness, she now tears open the envelope containing a brief scrawl from her husband at Kettle Island, running the

"AT THE CANTER, KETTLE ISLAND.

"DEAR HAZE,—Here goes for half a dozen lines, for my pen is a paint brush, and goes the rounds of the brave thirteen campers like the whiskey bottle, which, like the ink, is diluted by your favorite tippie—water. Pepper and I, you know

who I mean, that little fellow Gipp, that you won't smile upon, we baptised him Pepper, because of his spicey stories. It is so deuced hot I don't know where I am. Oh yes, Pepper, Brick and Cocktail, which means me, went into the Department of Interior yesterday, in common parlance the woods, for game, in three hours we bagged one crow. We were mad enough to eat it alive, and if hot words would have fried it, it would have been done brown. We drew lots as to which of us should pick, draw, and cook it, for we were just about ready for a good square meal. I made short work of the picking, when Pepper had to draw it, which he got out of by his wit in drawing it by a string along the ground.

"Next we, the three Graces, making rather free with a loafing bull, when he shouldering his spinal column, otherwise getting his back up, he legged it after us at such a rate as to send us up a tree, 'quicker than a feather would scorch in hades,' keeping us there, too, for four deuced hours, while he howled, dug up the earth, and waltzed around aforesaid tree. We were just about dropping on to him, a pot of dripping each one of us, when his drover and a couple of bushwhackers found and got the bull by the horns, instead of he us.

"Jupiter! what a rag-tail trio we were on arriving at the canteen; hang me if our experience won't cap any camp meeting experience this side of Jordan. Ugh! I am all broken up, but a pipe, a sleep, and something neat, will set me on my legs for to-night.

"Hope the kid is thriving, and that you and my pretty sister are putting in a jolly time.

"My paint brush is gone up.

"Beauvais is here, and, give the devil his due, 'twas he who made me turn painter, which has been a devilish bore, and, *entre nous*, there should be a clause in the marriage service which would exempt slaves of the ring from any such duty. Eh! hope the free air of the Sandbanks will bring you to my breadth of view. Amen.—Adieu.

"I lifts my bonnet to air my over-taxed brow,

"Yours, meltingly,

"PAT."

Not a remembrance of her birth-day she thinks, with a sigh, still he writes in a cheerful tone and she must be contented.

Next she breaks the crested seal of the letter from her friend, Mary Gunn, and reads :

"VETERAN LODGE, OTTAWA.

"HAZEL DEAR,—You must imagine the sisterly kiss and words of love I would give you if you were near me, dear, on this your birth-day. Papa joins me in wishing you many happy and ever growing happier returns.

"I hope you will like the bracelet I forward by this mail.

"I think Thicke, the engraver, has done his part simply perfect. I must tell you how the quaint and pretty words came to the silver circlet ; I was quite in the veriest quandary over the choice of half a dozen quotations, and indeed on Elgin-street was at Thicke's door, when McLean, dear fellow, coming along, solved my difficulty, seemingly with no thought, and to my excessive liking.

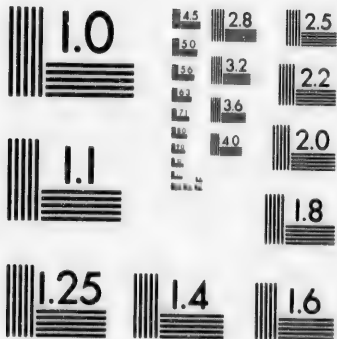
"I have something to tell you, dear, which I shall perhaps crowd in as a postscript, this much I say here to put you mentally on tip-toe.

"I am told you and Nell score ten to one *men* among your conquests at the Banks, but there, I shan't let the cat out of the bag yet; the fact is, I am in the same fix my son Stuart is, when he has a something to tell me that he is in doubt as to whether I shall give him the strap or a kiss for telling, and so gives it me in a quick breath and flees.

"And so to postpone, here goes for some scraps from the linguist, Dame Rumour. She hath it in plain English, that I am to become Mrs. Donald McLean, you see I give myself precedence over my *bête noir*, Miss Belleville, who in many tongues is to wed the attenuated youth, Beauvais, while my darling brother is to throw himself away on Miss Snobton, of Toronto. The latter is now visiting the Capital, her hostess giving an At-Home in her honor, everyone going, I, knowing the crowd would amuse me in the "silly season," arraying myself in my newest gown of black *crêpe de chine*, feather boa, and peach-bloom bonnet, drove to my destination.

"As I sat on one side of a divan, sipping iced claret cup, I was amused to hear Miss Snobton's voice, break with emotion, in describing one of her art gowns, while Pimp, one of our vulgar rich, walked over my boa to worship at the new Dollar Shrine.





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"Next, my horror the social astronomer, Mrs. Clinche, catechised me, concluding with, "and how is Col. Gray, infirm, I suppose?" On my assuring her of the good health of papa, turning a dissecting eye upon my diversified hair, taking in the traceries of time around my yellowish orbs of vision, she said, 'it's a wonder he's alive.'

"As is usual at an afternoon crush, our gentle sex were largely in force, while naughty men were few. Beauvais of course, was there *en masse*, and if he could have divided himself into lots of him, he would have found several claimants for his arms, everyone of the two hundred women waited, a solid immovable phalanx, for the dozen or so of men to take them into the refreshing room.

"I smiled sardonically, as I thought that each and all of these gay old chaps were called on to offer the elbow as often as they have offered their hearts.

"In short, define an At-Home, as a salaam, a squeeze, a crush, a jam, a salaam.

"Beauvais tells me he is going to take a run to Kettle Island.

"I knew you would wish yourself many happy returns of the day you reached the Sandbanks.

"Papa sends with mine, love to you and Nell,

"And am ever thine,

"MARY STUART GUNN."

"P.S.—Don't tell Nell.

"Roderick Ross Philbee Stuart Gray, there now I have taken your breath away, writes us he is at the Sandbanks as Mr. *Philbee*; that he has lost his heart to dear little Nell, and is going to beg her to become Mrs. R. R. P. S. Gray, and yours truly, M. S. Gunn, is a delighted woman."

With a bounding heart Hazel has but just time to slip the letter under the bedclothes, when Nell, bright as the star of morning, trips in to wish her many happy returns of the day, the many-hued ribbons of her pretty dressing gown flying about her and intertwining with her yellow hair; Poll trotting behind her, laughing and chuckling the while.

Later on, in nattiest of print gowns, fresh and sweet as the flowers of the forest, Hazel and Nell, with her hand bandaged, take an earlier breakfast than usual in the clean, airy dining

room at the hotel, with Mrs. Louis in travelling gown, whose last injunctions were, to be "extremely careful of their walks and ways with so many men about."

"'When found make a note on't,' Nell dear," laughs Hazel softly, as arm in arm they saunter back to Idle Bower.

"I should smile. I am going for a walk with Rod. this morning. As for Madame Louis, I don't believe she ever allows her spouse to be in her company for one single minute without a chaperon."

Hazel, taking baby Maston fresh from his bath into her pretty arms, she and Nell chat as they swing in the rockers on the piazza; as they sit, a small bare-footed boy comes up, and, with a grin, handing to Nell a bouquet of wild lobelias intermixed with maiden-hair, when like an arrow from a bow he has fled.

"The plot thickens!" smiles Hazel, her thoughts on the news in Mary Gunn's letter. "This is the third morning you have received such like. Fancy your secret admirer scaling the rock-bound shore and the damp and tangled woodland, while you wooed Somnus, for these have been gathered at earliest dawn. Here Betsy," she cries gaily, "more love tokens for Miss Nell; get a vase and water, please. Mr. Rice ought to be here, for the poacher is after his preserves."

Here a peal of laughter from Nell, the parrot joining in, causing Betsy's frown to relax into a broad smile.

"Sae bold, sae richt down daft!" she says, eyeing the flowers contemptuously.

"I hope you don't mean me?" cries Nell, with renewed laughter. "Listen to the usual poetic offering from the heart of the bouquet:

Thy beauty I have often-marked,
The fire of love consumes my heart.

"Faugh! the paper smells of tobacco and a barber's shop," and she lets it drop to the floor, Poll tossing it about with her beak, muttering the while.

"Yon had as daured to send you his dirty bit rhyme as naething but a hussey, an' his flowers are weeds like his ain sel'," says Betsy, wrathfully, "they have a bad smell, too, Miss Nell, how daur he! I'll just throw them outside, where he'll no fail to see them."

"Oh, no, stay your hand, Betsy, the flowers are lovely, whatever the man may be," says Hazel convulsed.

"But Miss Hazel, what would the master say, or the lad, Mr. Rice—" but her remark is never finished, for with a frown and stamp of foot, Nell says imperiously :

"There, you have brought a frown to my forehead, you forget yourself at times, Betsy, and take liberties of speech I do not permit in a servant. Put these flowers into water in the coolest corner of the room, here on this bracket, perhaps I shall wear them this evening, it will drive Rod. Philbee crazy, and my unknown admirer will not know he's in the soup. Time's up, sister-mine ; a few minutes to make myself beautiful, and to wash off the tobacco and barber shop contact with cashmere bouquet; you must tell me the news in Mrs. Gunn's epistle when I return."

Dainty she looks, as in a few minutes she re-appears in skirt of red cambric print, with white sash long and wide; fresh white muslin blouse, a red silk tie, under the wide turned-down collar, her lovely golden hair in a heavy coil behind and in fluffy bangs on her forehead, showing from under her large, drooping hat, gaily trimmed with large, white muslin rosettes, ornamented with peacock feathers, and red ones shed by Poll.

"Oh what a dear little bracelet," she says admiringly, "and such an apt quotation."

"Yes, I love it, but I did not think your little ladyship would consider it worth a look."

"Why?"

"Because you are sporting your wedding jewels and part of your elegant trousseau, dear."

"Ah Hazel, I do so because they have no preciousness to my heart, they are the price of my freedom; this one little silver circlet is worth them all, it is from a loved friend. Good-bye, dear," and with a smiling kiss and tender thought of all she knows from Mary Gunn's letter, Hazel sees her depart, blythe and gay, kissing her hand in return to Bell, who just emerges from his cottage 'Wonkitimad,' turning landward to the hotel to break his fast, while our pretty Nell, with firm yet soft insistence, shines down the southern distance, to where her own true lover waits for her at the stile which separates

the extensive lawn in front of the cottages and hotel from a magnificent length of woodland which continues to the southerly point of the promontory.

"His dark eyes full of a tender light and quickened heart-beats, as the lovely little creature approaches, his cap involuntarily pushed backwards as if to lose no glimpse of the gay little vision, he greets her with earnest words as he gives her his hand over the stile."

"You are late, little one; how is the poor maimed hand; here are you rings. Rice does not score as many points this morning, which I take as a good omen."

"Oh I'm so glad!" she says effusively, as they stroll side by side down to the cove in the rocks. "Yes, see, Rod., the dear old coal oil lamp has broken off the points of the R. for a fact! As Spindle says, R. is out in the cold; see, Rod., the R. off, leaves him done in ice."

But in raising her violet eyes to his face and meeting his unusually grave look of serious loving intent, her pretty head droops, her large hat completely hiding her blushing cheeks.

"I am jealous of your hat, Nellie, it hides the face I long to have always beside me; here, let me take it off, the trees are ample shade, and the sunlight, glimmering through, lights up your blonde hair into strands of gold."

"See how submissive I am, Rod., though I can be a regular little terror, as you know. There, don't, some one will see you, though your hand feels kind as it strokes my rather rebellious locks," and she looks searchingly into the dim woods.

"There is no one there, little one, except the boys who are carrying pails of water for the grain they are planting afar. Nor do I wish it; what can be sweeter than dual solitude? The rest of the festive four hundred have betaken themselves in gaily decorated carriages to Wellington for luncheon."

"Oh, they did go. Then my heart rejoices within me, for now we shall not be missed. Rod., I have been wondering who that horrid night-hawk of a man was, who I know intuitively knocked the lamp upon us."

"Oh surely not, Nellie, what motive could actuate so foul an act."

"I know not, Rod., but something tells me something, and I fear I know not what," and a little white hand is laid on his

arm as she again looks backward. "I must tell you, Rod., you have a rival."

"A rival! Who? Here, at the Sandbanks? But you do not surely, Nellie little one. What! a rival? You look serious, yet you are here with me alone; you kept your tryst. A tear! the first I ever saw in those dear eyes; what is it, pet? Here, spring from the rocks into my strong arms."

"What a dear little cove, Rod.; yes, I will tell you all. We, at Idle Bower, have seen a nasty skulking man, with, as far as we can see, which is into the gloom of some adjacent tree, a nasty face ever turned on Idle Bower, shining from the dusk as yellow as the sand of yonder hills. This morning is the third that has brought me a bouquet from some unknown admirer," she says, laughingly, turning her beautiful little face towards him as he sits on the rug that also forms a cushion for her on a boulder a little further out from the rocky wall of the cove than his own."

"Yes, Nellie," he says, watching the billowy motion the air from the lake beside them makes of the soft, white muslin of her sleeves, and as it plays about and among her wealth of golden hair from which, not heeding her playful chiding, he has drawn the pins.

"I don't believe you are listening, Rod., your look is too profound, like Poll when I am teaching her a new word. Stand up, old man, and pick me that purple lobelia from the rock behind you, which I shall use as an object lesson for what I have to tell you of the bouquet I receive each day built of blossoms such as these."

"What! I now most surely know what your woman wit hath already pieced together, that the skulking hound who woos you by such blossoms, and he who didst wish to do me harm last night are one and the same," and starting to his feet as with some wrong but now unfolded before his eyes, while yet remembering her slightest wish, reaches up to pick the pretty violet flower, when lo! by this act of standing erect, so altering his position, escapes a loosened rock which, pushed a little outwards from the wooded promontory above falls, with a crash down, down, on to the boulders, and not on to his head, as the miscreant hand above did so intend. When, failing this, he flies as swift as swiftest squirrel, through and out of sight,

amid the trees and back around the cape through woodland, fields of corn and rye, through underbrush and beauteous natural avenue, all by circuitous route, back, back to his quarters at Barks, where as a Toronto detective he boards; and in the quiet of his own locked door soliloquises on the mutability of human affairs, in that he, W. Pickford, should have so signally failed in his attempt to wound or kill the handsome Philbee, after planning all so well, on hearing the tryst at the cove, arranged the previous evening ere he had shook the pole and caused the lamp to fall.

"Curse him, he has a charmed life," he mutters, biting viciously at his unsavory nails. "What is his love to mine; I loved her first, but gave her up to Rice; they neither love her as I do, who have gazed upon her unadorned loveliness. Drat him! curse him! hang him!" and with his umbrella he whacks and whacks again the pillows of his bed; then putting his two vile hands into a scarce visible rent in the cover of one of them, he tears it into shreds, flinging and dashing, wishing every one a—Philbee. "Pup! fool! dude! ass!" he mutters viciously. "Would he arise ere dawn and gather flowers. No, he would rather drive to Picton and buy them in his darned white flannels and baby-waving locks; that rock would have done for him but for my little handsome devil, Nell Carew. I placed it carefully, and while that ease-loving dog Philbee slept; yes, it would have done for him, spoiled his beauty, all my dashing little enchantress cares for. I know his favourite seat just a little in from hers. By George! what I have put up with, lying in the underbrush above them listening to their love purrs, at the same time that I am keeping that conceited match-end Rice quiet.

"George! what brains I have, if I only had her without a penny I could make roast beef and plum pudding for her every day; and now for a bottle of Guinness' porter, with the gold of that ass, Rice; then dinner, and my daily quieting letters to Carew and the match-end; asleep to dream of her, until my nightly torture from out the dusk to see her sportive gaiety with everyone but—me, and then my reward. Yes, the day is long, two nights in one until from my perch within the branches of the maple tree I gaze upon her through the window of her couch bower."

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD OLD STORY.

"And down where the water lies dreamin',
In slumber sae peacefu' an' sweet,
He telt me o' something he's meanin',
To gie his dear lassie to keep."

"**R**OD., lift me up quick," cries Nell breathlessly, as the huge piece of rock falls with a crash on the boulders just where Philbee has been seated. In his arms, her head bent forward, the land breeze blowing her yellow hair back from her pink ears, her hearing unusually acute, accentuated, too by both small, firm hands—the bandage quickly torn off, behind her ears.

"Yes, Rod., some one flies! the eastern land breeze helps me. I hear the crackle of the underbrush. Quick, let me down, and climb to the top, use your field glass and perhaps you will see the wretch rounding the Point. Is it so, have you got him?"

"By jove, yes! clearly outlined against sky and water. Yes, on he flies though weighted with a deadly wrong to me, for though baulked in his intent, his soul must answer all the same."

"I'm glad of it, Rod., and if Lucifer doesn't think his soul too small and mean to bother about, I hope he'll make it hot for him."

"And now little one, what do you think of yourself?" he asks, leaping down to where she stands, "those little hands of yours wield a rod of empire; you know what you have done with me, and the fragments of broken rock filling our little cove prove your power over the man who hates me, for my nearness to your winsome self, but am I really, and truly, nearer to your sweet self than those over whom you queen it at the Sandbanks, nearer to you than the man to whom you are betrothed, so near that you will give him up for me.

Come little one, look up, your golden locks fall round you like a veil, yes, dash them back so;" and taking her lovely face between his hands he turns it upwards. "You tremble, sweet, and are still pale; we'll climb up from the rocks and find a grassy seat."

"Yes, Rod., though I know intuitively that man won't come a-glimpse of us again this morning. A commanding view of the promontory will build this child up again. No, Rod., here at the very point is a seat of nature's own building. No, don't ask me, I shall sit sideways, so I can see the stile and Betsy. Who is that bean-pole pine beside it? see, she is coming to chaperon this one," she says coquettishly, warding off what she sees in his eyes, he must and will tell. "These marguerites are lovely, Rod., but they would not be telling against the white back-ground of your coat, else I would give you one to prove I am glad you escaped that awful rock. If I have often tormented you, I saved you from that crumbly fate at all events," but the violet eyes do not trust themselves to meet his gaze.

"And to what end have you saved me, little one; you must hurt either Rice or myself, tell me you return my great love for yourself, just so much as not to hurt me, Nellie," and her hands are imprisoned in his own. "Tis true, I have not his wealth, but I have the promise of a very good berth in the Canada Life office at Toronto. We would have the comforts of life, and be sure, love, luxuries would not be all denied you, for with this loved hand in mine, my ambition to be both good and great would cause the successful fruition of all our hopes. I will not believe you could go away from me and marry Rice for whom you have no liking; the enchanting time we have spent together at this romantic spot would ever haunt you, dividing, ever your heart from his.

"At every sunrise you would again gaze with me over to the glorious east again, see Sol coming up, clearing the mists with his morning kiss as he makes our world so beautiful. *Our* world, sweet, in which you seemed content with me alone beside you, and then the one or two quiet evenings we have had," he says, with fervor, bending his handsome head till almost touching her golden hair, her hands lying without a struggle in his, as her heart-beats quicken.

"Ah Nellie, tell me that you can forget the walk we had through the avenue on last evening, or up, up on the highest ridge of the yellow Sandhills two evenings ago; tell me that you can forget and I shall lose faith in heart of woman. You remember sweet, when you picked up from the hills this beautiful little shell, giving it to me as my mascot; ah, love, could you forget such lovers' walks," he whispers, bringing a pretty blush to her cheeks. "Could you forget, go from me, leave me, a lonely heart, broken man, go from me to wed this man Rice; then shall I lose faith in woman. You must hurt one of us, say it won't be *me*," he pleads lovingly, "whisper little one, whisper."

"No Rod., you mustn't kiss me, Betsy has taken the form of that tall pine behind you, and is shaking all her arms and fingers at me."

"Ah Nellie, Nellie you little bewitching witch, just one little word," and his arm is slipped around her waist.

"Well, wait, Rod., like a darling, till I see what the marguerites say," and picking off the white circlet of leaves, she says, with a shy mischievous glance at his face, "I won't, I will—I."

"You *will* darling," he says, breaking in passionately, "you will, you will, you will," and he kisses her rose mouth as she is drawn close to his heart.

"Oh Rod., it frights me, as Betsy says, the way I care for you, when H.R. kisses me I feel like doubling my fists at him."

"Then you don't hate *me* when I kiss you, little one," he says, rapturously.

"You know," she says with a new shyness.

"Yes, I know, Nellie, come love, lay thy hand in mine, now, here, with God, with nature all around, we plight our troth," he says, with a grave earnestness, pressing her close and closer to his heart kissing the beautiful little face, then with an upward glance his white cap shook from off his shapely head, he says, reverently:

"Thy blessing heaven upon our troth,
And oh, thou God all powerful,
Though Thou, 'divorce our sky and sun apart,
Never, ah, never, our lips, our lips, our hands,'" "

"But, Rod, dear, what am I to with uncle Carew, with H.R., with Betsy; reach me one of her fingers, dear, those pine tufts you would call them, and we'll hear her speak as I count them off. She will assist us, she won't, she will," and in a pretty way she breaks them off till all are exhausted, crying triumphantly, "she *will*! and now I shan't bother you, dearest—that's a word H. R. doesn't know the sound of—with my doubts. Now, tell me how your own home rulers, whoever they may be, will perform, when you tell them that on the Sandhills you met a small being who may be one of Edison's dolls for aught you can tell, into whom an elf or fairy hath spoken saucy words of power, who hath taken the gold of her hair from her mater the yellow Sandhills, her eyes from the skies so near, her laughter from the water, and that this same small being hath plighted her troth to their dear boy, Rod, while at the very door of wedlock with a new dollar mortal. Now tell me please, my own dear Rod, what kind of caper they will cut!"

"You droll little elf, I do believe your mater was a fairy," he says, laughingly, "but as to my home-rulers you need have no fear, Nellie coming as you do from a race of soldiers—Irish, at that," he says, in happy mirth.

"No, even though they be goblins let them come on," she says, doubling her small, firm hands. "H.R., a mere acquaintance of mine at the Queen City, Mr. Philbee," she says, a comical look in her violet eyes, "tells me that a clerk in uncle Carew's office says I wouldn't be afraid to look at Mephistopheles himself, as if I had a smell under my nose. Pickford is the name of the clerk I allude to; he thinks I am very proud, and his satanic remark oozed from him, for he is one of the oily kind. After I had rejected a written offer of his oily heart and hand, if I ever hear he dies of fatty degeneration of the heart I shall not wonder. Rod! I have it, let me go," and she starts to her feet, her yellow hair falling below her zone, her beautiful little face aglow with the new joy of Rod's love. "Strange! those ridiculous lines I have been the recipient of each day with the bouquet are in the same hand-writing, and smell, as the proposal did, of tobacco and barber's shop. Can it be that the sneaking man is Pickford! Pshaw! I grow whimsical; all your fault, dear Rod, I never knew what fear

was till now, but I fear not now for self but for you. There, dear, that will do, Betsy frowns behind you when you kiss me ; now tell me of the Philbee's at Ottawa, and speak quick, dear Rod., for I see Betsy this time in the flesh—all she has—crossing the stile, baby Maston in her arms, coming to see after this child, proceed. Plain speaking is a jewel when a chaperon is nigh ; even though you be a prince incog., I, Nell Mohonesotreie Carew, am a fit mate for any prince. You wear a grave look ; I'm sure 'tis not a shock will turn me grey."

At this he bursts into hilarious laughter, putting his hands upon her shoulders, a saucy little face upturned to his.

"You've scored a point, you witch."

"I sometimes do, and you'll go over one if you don't stop laughing. See how near the edge you stand. I believe you want to drown yourself, so that this child won't disappoint your dear friend H. R."

"Oh Nellie, Nellie, witch, fairy, elf, listen, I am going to turn Gray, not you, and yet you are."

"I shan't, so there !" with a stamp of her little foot. I'll wed Pickford and H. R. both at once first. I will not change my golden locks for grey. Proceed, Mr. Philbee."

"No, not your beauteous yellow tresses, little one ; may I die, ere bringing you news to work such end," he says gravely, "but listen, I am going to turn Gray, and make you Mrs. Roderick Ross Philbee Stuart Gray, for I am that Master of Arts, Mary Gunn's brother, whom you said at Veteran Lodge you would *hate* for his perfections, and whom you have learned to care for, all imperfect as he is. Dear old Colonel Gray, who even now loves you as his little daughter—God bless him—is my loved and honored father. At Veteran Lodge we have longed for your coming, for we have all been in love with a miniature of you, my own. On hearing of your betrothal, we were more than sorry, knowing of Rice by repute, and feeling that with your high birth, not to speak of your beauty, you should wed a gentleman. The fact of my missing you at home cut me up awfully, and the fact that both Mary and the Governor were in love with you, maddened me at the having missed you."

"When you were so tired, and no wonder, at hearing my praises sang at every corner of the lodge, and told them you

were glad the M.A. had disappointed them ; it was their turn to feel badly."

"Well, Nellie, as Hazel had never seen me, McLean and I thought out this plan, and though I gave a hint of it to the dear ones at Veteran Lodge, 'twas but a hint, but I wrote them the day after I first came a glimpse of you, a bit of gold, up on the yellow sandhills in the red glow of the sunset, I heard your gay laughter as Bell neared the festive four hundred to introduce me ; you were seated a little apart with Moore, who poured the sand from out your fairy slippers. You were chatting merrily and acknowledged my introduction, you witch, by making round O's of these dear little fingers, looking through them, saluting me as a spectre of the hills, and so, darling, you see what a pretty little romance you have been the moving spirit of. How happy you have made me, and of how full, full, to the roof Veteran Lodge is of love for your dear sweet little self. Look up, little one, and tell me you are glad. I belong to Hazel's best friends."

"Oh my own dear Rod., my own dear, dear, Rod., I am more than glad, my heart seems bursting with such great joy," and her eyes are moist with intense feeling.

"You tremble, little one. We shall sit down here at the Point and wait till Betsy nears ; I must tell her the precious gift you have given me."

And in the eighteen years of Nell's earthly pilgrimage, nothing has ever quieted her for ten consecutive minutes as did this new knowledge of loving !

Heart-stirs to the musical swish of the water on the rocks beneath them is all they hear ; side by side they sit, with only the language of the eyes speaking of their silent ecstasy ; and 'tis with a start and long-drawn sigh they are aware that Betsy is upon them.

In a moment Roderick Gray is on his feet, and taking baby Maston in his arms, says joyfully :

"Betsy, congratulate me, I am the gladdest man on this whole planet ; the most precious little gem in all the maiden world, your mistress, Miss Carew, has promised to become my loved wife."

But Betsy has read the truth in the beautiful little face, transformed to a rarer loveliness by the magic hand of love.

"Yes, dear old Bet.," she says, catching her around the waist and waltzing her about. "Sing, rejoice, and be glad, for this lady of high degree will not now mate with the cobbler's son, but with a gentleman, as you have always desired. Yes, break forth and shout!" and a soprano note relieves her own surcharged feelings. "Yes, Bet., tell it to the waves, that they may laugh and sing, that I, Nell Mohonesotreie Carew, takes this youth of high degree, baptised Roderick—I forget your other call bys, Rod., dear—" and she wheels about to a standstill in front of him, the forefinger of one hand uplifted to strike off his names on her other fingers.

Longing to imprison her in his arms, but baby Leary filling them, he says *gaily*,

"Roderick Ross Philbee Stuart Gray, isn't my little one a very fairy of the green: Betsy, *she* never had an every-day common mother."

"That, I hadn't, I believe I was born of a bad Goblin, and a dear golden little fairy all in green, and not of Barbara Fitzgerald, Meredyth Hazel's mother."

At this, a pain as of a sharp knife goes through Betsy's heart.

"You don't look glad enough, Betsy don't you think H.R.'s successor is just, a darling," she whispers.

"It is na just that, lassie," and she wipes away a tear of sympathy, "for the laddie is both blythe an' bonnie, an' no to be even'd wi' ony, but it frights me to think o' my young leddy's uncle, sir, an' the lad, Mister Rice."

"Then don't think of them at all, Betsy, all I ask, is that, when the storm breaks at Broadacres, you will hide my little birdie under your kindly wing," he says, pleadingly, reading aright the look of love she turns on Nell, who like a wood nymph, dives or dodges the branches that Roderick holds back from flapping into the face of the tall, plain woman who walks beside him.

"Ye dinna ken the master o' Broadacres, sir, or ye wad tremble for Miss Nell," she says, earnestly, standing still in sheer fright at the remembrance of his parting words to herself.

While Gray, looking like a handsome king of the forest, drawing himself up to his full height of six feet, strong in his

love for Nell, drawing her close beside him says vehemently :

"If I thought Mr. Carew would show any real unkindness to this my little future wife, I would win her consent to an elopement, eh pet?" and he presses his hand lovingly over the pretty head pressed close to his heart. "If I thought that those dear eyes would, through unkindness of her uncle, weep for the joy she has given me to-day, I would pick her up in my arms, carry her to Picton and make her my wife this very hour."

Betsy stares at him admiringly through her wet eyes, for women worship courage in men, and as they again walk through sweet-scented woodland he continues :

"After all, Betsy, Mr. Carew is not the father of your young mistress, only her guardian."

"Only my guardian, Rod. ! alas for three years !"

"Yes, little one, but we will try and soften his heart."

"Yes Rod., we'll try, but I am afraid if I have to live a prisoner at Broadacres until I am of age, you will have to hoist a magnifying glass to find what will be left of me by that time," she said with a sigh.

"What a great big grown-up sigh," he says gently, and behind Betsy she is lifted in his strong, young arms, her beautiful little face pressed close to his own.

"Let me down, dear, we are nearing the stile and the many-eyed cottages ; lend me your field glass, I think I see Hazel watching for us at the door of Idle Bower. Rod. I believe I am in my dotage, else would I fly like an arrow from my beau, to tell Hazel the joyful news of H. R. being - excuse the slang - in the soup."

"You little witching witch, it's my belief your witcheries will so hold me captive that I shall forget to go out and earn our daily bread."

At this our pretty Nell sends a peal of merry laughter through the sweet-scented woods, baby Maston turns his smiling baby face over Betsy's shoulder, and the birds trill more sweetly, and Betsy says :

"I'm thinking, sir, that the master will na care though ye hae' to mak' your daily bread ; he will tak' on awfu', he will be for giein' a' his money to some public charity, so he telt Miss

Nell an' my ain sel' mony a time, if she does na buckle to wi' the lad, Mister Rice."

"What do you say to that, my little witching fairy, done in red?" he says, holding her face so he can scan its expression, while, with a rebellious glance at Betsy, she says:

"Betsy, I am ashamed of you, to insinuate that Mr. Gray might care one cent about uncle's dollars; *we* have our plans laid, my good woman. Mr. Gray is going to save his coppers and buy a piano-organ, and we'll go about evenings; we will have to finance carefully, we know, but we'll come out all right," she says, gaily, "because, Betsy," she goes forward and whispers in her ear, "because *we*, my ain dear laddie and I, care, *oh, such* a big lot for each other; but, Bet," she says, tremulously, though again audibly, 'if uncle Carew acts like a great big Czar of Russia and turns me out to earn my bread, then you will stay with me and keep the bad quarter of the world, which is, perhaps, the biggest half, off from me, and so keep me good and pure and sweet for my best and dearest love, when I become of age."

At this the eyes of Gray glisten, while Betsy says, brokenly:

"I'll never leave ye nor forsake ye, lassie, an' I'll pray God to soften the heart o' the master."

"See, my darling," says Rod., "here is Hazel at the stile waiting for us, and looking so expectantly glad I shall not be surprised to hear that Mary has written her of how you, my own darling, have made of me a willing captive."

"Only the law of compensation, Rod.," she whispers, "for you remember what the old priest says in 'Cleopatra': 'she is thy slave, yet holds thee captive.'"

Baby Leary holds out his arms on seeing his mother, but Hazel is for once oblivious, her whole thought being absorbed by Nell: one look is enough and her arms are about her.

"I am more than glad, Nell, dear," then giving her hands impulsively to Rod., says, "So you are Roderick Gray whom I knew I should like for dear Mary and Colonel Gray's sake, if not for your own; oh, how glad I shall be to call you brother; what a Master of Arts you have proved yourself, to have turned Nellie's hate into love," she says, gaily.

"Hazel Leary, don't allude to my gone bys, and drop Rod's hands or I shall telegraph Beauvais to hint at the divorce

court to Pat. You have not thanked me for giving you a birthday gift."

"Oh, yes, dear, I have, mentally, ever since I read the glad news in Mary's letter, for I knew," she says, with a little sigh for her own wedded shortcomings, "you wouldn't say him nay when you are aware of how I have longed for a dear, good, manly brother, and of *course*," she adds, banteringly, "you have said him yea merely to give me a birthday gift."

"Yes, sister of the cat green orbs, all for you, for you!" then breaking forth into low murmured song, she sings:

"Hoo licht is my heart at the gloamin',
When far up the high sand hills I see
My dear laddie comin', an' comin'
Down through the green cedars to me!"

"Eyes right!" says Hazel, lightly, "we are running the gauntlet of the cottages."

Sylvan Grove, the James' of Belleville cot, looking as though taking a siesta, is passed; Dove Cote is safely gone by without a jotting by Grundy. On the verandah of the cot "Wonkifinad," a couple of men, in laziest *dolce far niente*, smoke and read, at times lifting a sleepy eyelid to McGinty's hut, where a bride in an unusual fit of shyness secludes herself, the everyday desire to parade her trousseau in the eyes of the hotel guests not being sufficient to nerve her to appear at the table d'hôte. Rollickers' Dene, where Gray, Moore, Sims and Spry are passing their summer day, is quiet, the "boys" off to Wellington with the driving party, and now Idle Bower is reached, in the little parlor of which, embellished with wild flowers and ferns in profusion, the happy trio have an old-fashioned talk over Betsy's famous lemonade and delicate English biscuits. After a delightful half hour, Rod's handsome face bends in a lover's good-bye to the beautiful little face shyly uplifted.

"Good-bye, my own, I am selfishly sorry that we have this *bal blanc* on for to-night at Kingston, else I should have carried you off to the top of the highest Sand Hill, where that sneaking admirer of yours would never have followed us, pet."

"That would have been a grand checkmate, Rod, but you could not have worn your white silk knee breeches and hose,

your mauve brocade coat and powdered wig up there, and I am just aching to see you so," and the small hands play with his watch chain, showing above the red Gordon scarf.

"Are you going to publish the banns of marriage here, at the Sandbanks?" asks Hazel, returning radiant, though having surprised Betsy on her knees upstairs covertly examining a something in her palm which she had hastily concealed in her bosom as Hazel had entered, "or are you going to see first if Rice will sue for breach of promise?"

Gray laughs, drawing Nell close to him.

"May I, little one, the man has yet to be born who would be a more joyous herald."

"No, Rod., dear, I prize the knowledge too much. We expect my friend, Maud White; I shall only tell her, even Doctor Helen must not know, whom I see all togged up for luncheon, coming to hunt me up. Go now, dear."

"Yes, I suppose, I must leave you; but one word, my pet, may I tell Burt Moore? I have a special reason, it is, that as he has already noticed this skulking hound you have told me of, I want to take him into my confidence, and see if we cannot bring him to time."

"Yes, yes, Rod., as you think advisable, dear, bye-bye." At four o'clock the afternoon of the same day, there was much gay scampering of ladies fair and gallants gay from the magnificent beach, where in the fresh water surf they had swam, dived, and sported generally and collectively. There was the hurried patter of many feet along the corridors of the hotel and to the cottages, for in an hour they start for the drive to Picton, from thence taking a specially chartered steamer to the Limestone City of Kingston.

Hazel and Nell, ever the cynosure of many eyes at the beach, in trim red and blue bathing suits, are with bright Mrs. James, of Belleville, all becomingly mantled, followed by admiring eyes to their cottages.

That same evening, Pickford, in a biting rage at missing Nell in the almost deserted music room, 'caught on' to bits of chit-chat, telling of her whereabouts, when wishing the festive four hundred at a warmer place than Kingston, and the æsthetic parlors, at Slashedale Villa; overhearing also, that the revellers would not return till the morn, in a very bad

temper, he returned to his quarters at Barks', and gave vent to his feelings in excessively sour epistles to both Carew and Rice.

While at the same moment the lovers, Nell and Rod., tread many a measure to music's rhythm in the bewitching scene at the *bal blanc*.

"Tis an earthly paradise, dear," whispers Nell.

"And you, little one, are my chosen angel, in your white gown and pearls. When shall we float through this nether world hand in hand? I telegraphed my father, ere we left the Sandbanks, to write your uncle at once."

"Hide me in this corner, Rod., where Hazel's eyes have been upturned in all innocent allurements to the stricken Bell. Hazel says, married women shouldn't wear white, but she looks bewitching so, and in dear mamma's diamonds." But finding that this is a favorite rendezvous, they leave the Villa for the lantern-lighted grounds.

"Is it not a pretty scene, Rod. See, dear, through the open windows, the pure, white gowns, white gems, white tresses, and you men in blue, or mauve silk coats and white silk hose and knee breeches; your silver buttons, too, catch the candle lights. Cupid will use up all his arrows to-night, Rod."

"Come away, sweet, I see four or five men whom I feel intuitively are on the lookout for a dance with you. Here is a more secluded path over this way."

"Ah Rod., you men have a good deal of the old Adam in your composition."

"How so, you witch?"

"Because, he being the prince of darkness, you at times choose obscure and narrow ways."

"I must tell you, Nellie, of how a Circassian woman defined the use of a dark and narrow path," he says, amusedly. "She, in travelling a very wide road, the only other traveller being a man, who plodded along the other side without saying one word; finally, the road narrowed to a mere foot path, bringing the travellers together, and within sight of a dark forest, when the woman said unto the man, 'I am afraid to go through that dark and lonely road with you, lest you overpower me by force and kiss me against my will.'

"I don't see how I could, with this great brass kettle on my back, live chickens in one hand, and leading this goat and carrying this stick in my other hand."

"Oh yes you could," she replied, "and easily too, by sticking your cane into the ground and tying the goat thereto, lowering the kettle off your back, and giving me the chickens to hold, you could easily overpower me by force and kiss me against my will."

"And when they came to the dark and lonely spot the man did just as her quick wit had suggested to him."

Nell laughs softly, saying, "yes, he would have required prompting, poor innocent, just as you would had you been in his place, dear."

CHAPTER X.

RIGHT DOWN, DOVEY, DOVEY.

"He sings aboot me his wee dearie
As sweet as a laverock in sang."

THE following afternoon about 2 p. m. the three carriages which had conveyed the merry throng to Picton *en route* for the *bal blanc* at Kingston, once more landed their living freight on the great platform in front of the piazza of the Surf Beach House, Sandbanks.

The guests who were gathering to the dining-room from the various outings, lingered to watch the merry party alight, and the linguist Dame Rumour to see, and hear, if there be anything to swell the brew of the scandal pot.

Yes, the absent Mrs. Bell must be told of her husband's devotion to the all-unconscious, sweet-faced Mrs. Leary.

That girl, Rhita Sims, with the claret hair and face, should be straddled for her promiscuous flirtations; and as for Mesdames Mill of Montreal, and James of Belleville, it was quite

too giddy in them to have chaperoned such frivolities as silken hose and knee breeches.

Pretty Miss Carew does not wear her diamond ring on her engagement finger, and from Mr. Philbee's manner towards her, he is the cause of it.

Hazel, making a break for the outskirts of the crowd, snatches baby Maston from Betsy, dances him, and coos to him, down the walk to Idle Bower. "Any letters by last night's mail, Betsy?"

"Yes, Mistress Hazel, there be some fra' Ottawa for yoursel' an' Miss Nell."

At Idle Bower, hastily breaking the seal of her almost daily line from Beauvais, she reads:

"RUSSEL HOUSE, OTTAWA.

"MY DEAR MRS. LEARY:

"Have just returned from a run to Kettle Island; Leary is quite well and in tip-top spirits. Ottawa is *empty*, without the hostess at Metcalf-street. I am going to send your maid, Amaranth, down by rail to-day, so that you will not be unattended on your return to Ottawa on Saturday, per steamer. In all your gay junketings don't forget to remember the friends who miss you at the Capital.

"Yours to command

"HUGO BEAUVAIS.

"TO MRS LEARY, Surf Beach House,

"Sandbanks, Co. of Prince Edward."

The gay old boy, giving the cold shoulder to anything so old-fashioned as truth, hoards the fact of Adele Belleville and Madame Vilaine being guests at the "Canteen."

In a few minutes, Nell, attended by most of the festive 400, storm Idle Bower to carry her back to the hotel to luncheon.

"I have my mail to read!" cries Nell.

"Which one?" asks Bell.

"Just the one fra' Ottawa," says Betsy, innocently, at which there is much merriment.

"Three cheers!" shouts Nell, gladly, waving an open letter.

"My friend, Maud White, will arrive this afternoon, about five o'clock; what do you all say to going in procession to-

wards Bloomfield, to meet her? We would have a razzle dazzle time."

"Hip! Hip! Hurrah?" cheer the "boys."

"Could we not go on horseback and escort her all the way?" asks Rhita Tims.

"Yes," answers her sister, Eva, "if we could fold ourselves up and get into five or six habits, all there are amongst us."

"Or ride a-la clothes pin," says Nell, demurely, in an undertone to Mrs. James.

"I move," says Moore.

"Well, go on," breaks in Bell, "there will be your space for a better man."

"I second Moore's motion," says Gray: "that this meeting do adjourn till after luncheon, to give Nell Carew a chance to read her billet-doux." At this there is a scattering of the forces, when Nell, sinking on a cushion, endeavors to arrest wandering thought by the contents of her mail.

"Hazel, listen! H. R. *condoles* with me on my enforced—on your account—vegetation at this one-horse place. One-horse, indeed! I wish he had seen us—from a safe distance—at the *bal blanc* last night, which would have been an eye-opener for him. He writes from New York city, and see, Hazel, he uses the new amatory note. *Regardez!* the watermark is two very high-shouldered looking hearts; 'write me down an ass' should be the motto of H. R. He calls my attention to the aromatic kiss, here, in the corner."

"What! that gummy looking spot?" laughs Hazel.

"None other, dear. He says he has a new silk hat, and that several society belles turn to gaze at him as he passes, wishing they could arrange an introduction. He concludes his unblushing laudation of self by stating that *we*—meaning himself—will be the handsomest couple in the Dominion."

"What a conceited little fellow he must be."

"I should say so; he is the smallest affair I have ever handled. Hazel of the cat-green orbs, I am just awfully in love with Roderick Ross Philbee Stuart Gray. Yes, I have the fever bad," and catching up Poll by the back, dancing her up and down on the toe of her small bronze slipper, she pelts her with torn atoms of the lines of self-adulation from the small banker. After a wild scene of merriment she suddenly remem-

bers that two communications from Ottawa are still unopened.

"Be quiet, Poll, you are as mad as your mistress. Oh, Hazel, isn't this sweet from Rod's father. He writes : . . .

"On receiving a telegram yesterday morning from my dear boy saying, 'wish me joy, write Carew *at once!*' . . . Mary and I are delighted, and will be to you a loving father and sister. My old heart warmed to you at first as sister to our dear Hazel, and in our pleasant chat I loved you for yourself, and longed for you as a new little daughter. I feel quite sure of your uncle's consent to your marriage to my dear son ; he must necessarily have felt excessively uncomfortable at the prospect of your union with a man of plebeian origin. God bless you, my dear little daughter. Write to me occasionally, and beg your uncle to permit you to visit us next month. With a father's love to you and dear Hazel,

"Yours faithfully,

"ROSS STUART GRAY.

"To MISS CAREW,

"Surf Beach House,

"Sandbanks, Prince Edward Co."

"Isn't he a darling?" says Hazel, the moisture in her large eyes. "What a poverty of sympathy would be in my life were it not for the dear ones at Veteran Lodge."

"Hazel of the shining orbs, control thyself, or you will send Poll and I into hysterics," and two or three bird-like notes set Poll off again. "Here comes a maid from the hotel for our tray, it was kind of the long-legged spirit of the Banks to send us our luncheon ; Do you know, sister mine, that all the 'ants on life's hill' seem to be overflowing with the milk of human kindness since I have met and loved my own dear Rod. Come up-stairs, dear, and indulge in a *siesta* before we are pounced upon by the festive 400 to go and meet Maud White, and I wish you to tell me whether to drape my small person in my duck of a frock in pink bunting, or in my fetching scheme in oyster-shell surah ; for I mean to look sweet, as sweet this evening for—somebody."

The result of the cogitations is that Hazel rides and Nell drives with Mills—the stage-coach driver—to Bloomfield, a distance of eight beautiful miles ; Gray's pleading to be allowed to accompany her being of no avail, Nell managing to whisper :

"If you came others would, and Rod, dear, I am going to tell Maud, and this is only Wednesday. We have until Saturday together."

"Please, uncle John," pipes Rhita Tims, "Nell Carew is flirting with Rod. Philbee."

"For a fact," replies Spindle, "I believe you're right, Miss Tims; some of you girls will be changing your names."

"To Mrs. Philbee!" sings out Ariminda.

"Good enough!" cries Spindle, to whom Gray on his arrival, and when registering, had confided his surname.

"As Rod. Philbee has the reputation of being such a flirt," says Nell, gaily, "I was only asking him to think of me if he has time." And, wheeling about, she springs into the carriage; touching the spirited steeds with the lash, away they bound from the platform in front of the piazza of the hotel, as Hazel, mounted on a spirited bay, looking charming in her dark green habit, pointing her riding whip towards Nell, says merrily, "Her Majesty's outrider," and away they go to Bloomfield to meet the Toronto train.

The festive 400 now disperse to meet again in an hour to go in procession to meet them on their return.

"Follow my lead, Moore, if you have nothing else on hand. I wish to speak with you particularly."

"All right, Philbee."

"Rod. ! Rod. ! Rod. !" call several of the bright girl guests; "the office of consoler is sweet, we all bid for the berth."

"*Merci*, I am yours—in an hour."

"Come on girls to the blue ribbon bar for a treat," calls Jack Spry, "I've won a dollar from Bell, on Philbee. I bet Nell Carew would make him take a holiday. Beil bet she'd let him go with her to Bloomfield. Hurrah!"

The young girl whom Hazel and Nell have gone to meet is Nell's friend, who has been spending thus far of the summer at "Moyvane," a pretty cottage at the beautiful Hamilton beach—the joint and only heritage of Hazel and Nell. Maud has been there with her mother, who, wedding a second time, is Mrs. Long, a large motherly woman and christian scientist. Her daughter Maud has her own purse, and has been educated at Helmuth College, London, Ont., where she and Nell became friends. Maud is an unassuming, lady-like, thoughtful girl,

wholly devoted to our pretty Nell, whose great beauty and pretty rebellious ways fascinate her, she, herself, being under much self-control by reason of the tutelage of her mother.

At the sleepy little station at Bloomfield, the advent of Hazel coming in at a gallop, while Nell, having given Mills' horses the whip, both girls being the very embodiment of vitality and beauty, cause an awakening among the lotus-eaters at the dépôt.

Maud, delighted that the sisters had come to meet her, looks quite pretty in the excitement of the moment.

"I never saw you look so well, Nell," she says, as they drive to the Banks; "if you would only wear white at your wedding instead of your heliotrope silk travelling-gown, but still, with such lovely roses on your cheeks you will look awfully sweet. Are you positively going to leave here on next Saturday?"

"I can't tell until to-morrow night's mail, Maud; I have begged uncle to let me stay another week, but you see Hazel will leave for Ottawa on Saturday, *sure*, and uncle is a crank on my preciousness being well chaperoned."

"I know, but you have Betsy."

"Yes, you know, and I know, but our united no's don't count, when he smells a rat."

"Are there many gentlemen here, Nell?"

"We could do with more, but there are enough for *me*."

"Where is your engagement ring? Oh, Nell, it is unlucky to take it off."

"Hush! the driver will hear. Mills, stop, please, we wish to get out and pick some of those lovely cherries."

Before they again enter the carriage Maud, in open-eyed astonishment, has been told in a few quick, heartfelt words the story of Nell's love.

"Now, don't you think I have done right, Maud?" asks Nell, her pretty cheeks flushed, her violet eyes like stars.

"Certainly, dear. Oh, I wish the horses would fly. I do so want to see your new *fiancé*, Roderick Gray," she says, musingly. "I like the name, Nell, it savors of manliness; but what a change! How about your marriage—what will your uncle say? he is so harsh—does he know? Oh, how much you have to tell me. Does Hazel like him?"

"She just loves him, Maud, and you may love him all you can spare from Alec Burns, for my own dear Rod."

me his whole heart, and I mean to keep it, too," she says, with a pretty boastfulness.

"Nell, dear," says Maud, regarding her intently, "you are changed; true, pure love ennobles."

"I'll tell Alec you said he had ennobled you."

"Oh, Nell!" says Maud, blushing, "but I was about to say, that whatever way your uncle takes it, I am glad, glad for you. Alec has told me of women who are unfaithful to their husbands."

"Or most times vice-versa!" breaks in Nell.

"Oh, Nell!"

"Oh, Maud! for a fact! but go on."

"Alec says, the reason is because there is an absence of love on the part of the wife. Now, I know, Nell, that pride would prevent you developing into a horrible married flirt, still you would, perhaps, have been tempted had you married Mr. Rice. Yes, it's a thousand times better, you will marry your own dear love. Mr. Rice can marry some of the women he boasts he can get any day."

"Maud White, I did not know you were an advocate for bigamy. You say H. R. may wed *some* of the women, well, *n'importe*, he's welcome to vie with Solomon so he smokes the calumet with uncle over me. I tell you what it is, Maud, pride or no pride, was I now *forced* into a union with H. R. I'd develop into a regular little demon, and be in the divorce court in as short a time as convenient. Uncle settles \$50,000 on me the day I wed H. R., but, as it is, Heaven only knows what shape his Irish temper will cut up into; but Maud, you needn't wear that look of fright, dear, for I am going to marry my own true love, and be a goody, goody little Sunday girl 360 days in the year. I'm going to be right down bad the other day, for men don't like bread and butter and sugar every day in the year."

Maud laughs, saying, "Alec made me promise, if you leave on Saturday, that I go up to Toronto with you, and he will meet me and see me home to Hamilton on the *Modjeska*. Alec thinks, with mother and I, that Moyvane is a perfect little gem of a cot. I have the whole season's rent in my purse, for you and Hazel, our landladies."

"All serene, Maud, we are the landladies that can spend it, dear, though Hazel's share will be stopped by uncle for the trousseau he provided."

"Alec comes out to the beach every evening."

"Tra la, tra la, over the river," laughs Nell, "you two are antiringly dovey, dovey. Maud White, this child is going to flirt with Cyril Tims, when we meet the procession; you may have Rod. on loan, for you are not even to lift an eye-brow at him to-night in the music hall; for if uncle Carew gets his spinal column up, and makes me cut and run on next Saturday, Rod. and I have only two more evenings, Maud."

"What next, I'm all attention."

"I am not going to give you away; you must not, out of the abundance of the heart, speak of Alec, but must imagine *requiscat in pace* to be written over his boyish frame, and flirt all you can."

"You mean all I know how."

"Well, perhaps I do, let me see who will fit the case; at present, Rhita Tims is playing with the heart of Smith, the rich vegetarian, and pretends to dote on cabbage heads. Oh! I have it, the twins from the St. Lawrence, who make real music on the zither; you may have them both."

Here Hazel, lovely and radiant, reining in her horse, meets them.

"Here they come, we shall soon meet them; Bell is the only one mounted."

"Which does not wear a suspicious look at all, oh no, merely a constitutional," says Nell, dryly; "Maud," she whispers, watching Hazel's face out of her mischievous eyes: "Maud White, that man Bell wishes his wife was extinct, *extinct, ma chere*, and Hazel is a church member, low church at that. I am going to write and inform my cashmere-bouquet brother-in-law."

"You little terror!" laughs Hazel.

"Why do you call Mr. Leary so? He must be tremendously sweet," says Maud innocently.

"So he is," says Nell, sentimentously, admiring her golden bang and lovely face in a pocket-glass, and pinning a bunch of yellow and red cherries to the embroidered bodice of her pretty white gown; "push your hat further back, Maud, so

that you can see all that goes on ; see, you have a cunning little smut on the end of your nose."

"Oh, have I?"

"Never mind, Maud—it is the smut of civilization," says Hazel, merrily, "here they come!"

A motley throng appeared, singing "Little Annie Rooney," to the music of mouth harp, zither, and banjo, the latter in the hands of Roderick Gray, whose sweet tenor came distinctly to Nell's ear.

At Nell's command, Mills reins in his steeds, when the fantastic throng surround the carriage.

"There are your twins," whispered Nell, laughing convulsively.

"Where?" asks Maud, blushing carmine, at which Hazel smiles abundantly, causing Bell to wheel up his horse abreast of hers, and say :

"Don't turn back with the procession, come for a canter with me, now don't refuse me."

"Yes, I'll go if you won't look so serious about it ; we can easily return and overtake those giddy butterflies ere they reach the hotel."

"Which is your Roderick Gray?" asks Maud, in a flutter of excitement.

"Rod. *Philbee*, remember : in white flannels, red cap, tie and Gordon sash, that tall, handsome fellow, isn't he just divine? You see him in front of that cool-headed McCullough, done by a Toronto tailor, though awfully nice."

"Yes, I see he is tremendously handsome."

"To your feet, Maud, eyes right, and a witching smile!" says Hazel, wheeling her horse stock still beside the carriage. "I must present you. To all you gay spirits from the Sandhills, I introduce Miss Maud White, whom I prophecy ere the sun sinks to the water beyond yon yellow sands, will have taught you many a new trick of a summer day enjoyment."

And now what a musical murmur, and burr burr, to the accompaniment of the twitter twitter, hum hum, of the bees and birds in this beautiful natural avenue, to the western background of which, through and above the woods, gleams a long, unbroken ridge of Sandhills of some six hundred feet, sharply outlined against the summer sky.

Rhita Tims, done in claret, with her claret cap borne aloft on a cedar branch, a gleam of mischief on her sunburnt face, now came forward and presented to Maud a bunch of parsnips and carrots, tied with ribbons, saying, while indicating a lanky, saffron-hued man,—“from a vegetarian!” at which his whole frame rattles with vegetable nervousness, on which the “boys” roar, and Tims blows a blast on the fog horn. Coming up to the side of the carriage says, coaxingly :

“Get out, Nell, do, and give a fellow a chance ; you haven’t given me a look or a smile for days.”

“All right ! Cyril, lift me down, I’m going to be right down dovey dovey to you all the way back.”

At which his boyish face wears such a look of exultant happiness that Rod. is jealous, but is obliged to be content with a tender glance from the violet eyes. Doctor Helen and Gray now escort Maud White, who elects to walk to the hotel.

At the same moment Hazel and Mr. Bell, reining in their horses to a walk and a stand still, take a long look at the sun, a ball of fire showing above, and as if resting on the yellow hills.

“It is a strangely, beautiful sight,” says Hazel, while Bell, knowing he dare not make any open declaration of love or in any word show his unfaithfulness to the absent Mrs. Bell, yet, in a burst of feeling, says :

“Look off, dear love, across the fallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss, in sight of all the lands,
Ah, longer, longer, we.”

At which Hazel bounds off at a canter, wishing Bell at the other side of the hills.

CHAPTER XI.

A BIRD OF ILL OMEN.

"In mony a kiss, an' mony a smile,
The hours gae by sae quickly, O;
And on they glide nor mark the while
The storm-clouds gathering thickly, O."

AS the fantastic procession wend their happy way through nature's avenue to the Surf Beach House, Roderick Gray replies at random to Maud or Doctor Helen's drolleries, only hearing Nell's siren voice in "Marguerite" and "Good-bye, Kathleen," as she leads the merry throngs with Cyril Tims beside her side. About a quarter of a mile from the hotel they came to Barks', when Tims says:

"Let's cut the crowd, Nell, and come in to Barks' and have a milk-shake. I want you to tell me if I have any chance now that you don't wear that ring on your engagement finger. I tell you what it is, Nell, if you say 'no' I'll be no more good in this world. Come in, my dear little angel."

"All right, Cyril, I'll go in, but remember I am not an angel, and I don't want to be, at least not for ever, ever so long."

Burt Moore, knowing from Rod. of the engagement of the golden-haired witch to himself, and who is bravely trying to console himself with Eva Tims, cannot refrain from a longing glance after the pair, as kissing their hands to the procession they turn towards Barks', and Rod., sauntering along, seeing the dainty skirts of Nell's white frock coquettishly drawn aside from the pretty foot, as she lifts it to the step at Barks', for Tims to tie her shoe, as she smiles over her shoulder at her lover, cause him to determine that ere long he must have her his very own.

No person being in the shop at Barks', our pretty Nell, always undaunted, opens the door of the sitting-room, surprising the proprietor netting a twine hammock, his good wife and four daughters, with distended eyes and ears, swallowing thrilling Toronto detective yarns in which the narrator was the hero instead of Cuddy and that ilk.

"Mr. Pickford, you here!" exclaims Nell. "When did you arrive?"

"Last night, late, came up from Kingston," he answers, unblushingly, nudging Barks meaningly and offering his hand. "I hear you have a hop every evening down at the Surf Beach House; you won't deny me a waltz to-night, Miss Nell?"

Tims wished the ogling fellow, with his air confidential, at Russia, as, with a wink at the family, he orders ginger ale and soda water—with the gold of the small banker—for each and all, afterwards accompanying Tims and Nell to the hotel.

"Either of those two is the party the detective is after," says Barks, his fist coming to the table, making the empty glasses ring. "I hope it's not that handsome young lady."

"I guess it be," replies his wife. "There is something uncanny in such beauty as hers, an' no one knows the tricks of they city beauties."

Pickford shows himself cunningly desirous of causing Tims to feel *de trop*, so that our pretty Nell will be alone with himself in this charmingly romantic avenue, but though to Tims' eyes he is disgustingly demonstrative in manner and tongue, the young fellow stands firm, for he sees that Nell is anything but pleased at the meeting.

"You are having a pretty good time here," he says, in an undertone. "Some fellow has been making love to you. I see it in your eyes."

"You are a horrid man! I only wish uncle Carew heard you."

"I love to see your deuced pretty eyes snap like that, and I know you are not at all vexed with me, and are going to give me that waltz to-night."

"Stop taking hold of my hand and arm like that; I just hate to be mauled as if I were a kitchen maid."

"Oh, you do, do you? You can't make me believe that with your eyes. Say, pretty one, I won't tell Rice of your flirtation here, if you will give me that one little waltz," and he endeavors to detach one of the cherries from her bodice, as he walks beside her.

"Leave my cherries alone, and if you won't pest me any more, you may have the second waltz to-night. Remember, I am only going to dance with you to get rid of you," and she turns her beautiful little face scornfully towards him.

"No matter, I shall hold you in my arms." At this, she

makes a *move*, at which he only laughs. They being now in front of the crowded piazza of the hotel, he says :

"Introduce me to some of those women, that I may kill time with them until I hold you to my heart."

"Oh, do hush ; you make me tired. Ask Spindle—that long-legged man supporting one of the piazza columns—to introduce you ; he will, as he has seen you with Miss Carew," she says, with pretty dignity ; while Gray, making a break through the guests, is at her side, just as she is saying to Tims, who is disappointed enough to cry at the way he has been euchred.

"Cyril, isn't Pickford a beast ?"

"I should say so. I felt like kicking him into a jeily, only he posed as a friend of yours."

"Who is the fellow, Nell ?"

"That excessively nasty fellow, Pickford, of whom I have told you," she replies, meaningly.

"Yes !" he says with a start.

"And he *says*, she continues, "but Pickford and truth are not even bowing acquaintances—he arrived last night, but you and I know better," she says, dancing on a few steps, tossing the cherries one by one upwards. "But don't let us spoil time by talking of him. I am going in to Idle Bower to get togged up for this evening, and assist Maud unpack."

Tims, feeling too cut up to talk, unconcernedly went on to Rollickers' Dene, while Rod. lingered to say :

"I want you all to myself this evening, Nellie ; I cannot stand having all those boys making love to you. Go up to ten, late, little one, I shall see you from the Dene and will follow afterwards. Give them all the slip, and come with me, my own pet, for a stroll to the Point in the gloaming."

"Yes, that will be lovely, Rod., or you might carry me off for a row, until our dance is on ; first waltz, you know, for that beast of a Pickford will dog our steps openly now. Whisper, dear," and her beautiful little face is flushed and frightened. "I am *afraid* of him, darling, for *your* sake ; remember the loosened rock." And giving him a tender little look, she vanishes.

With knit brows, and thoughtful mien, Gray passes on to Rollickers' Dene, when Spry not being in, and Moore with the

indignant Tims in the act of sitting on Pickford, and, taking a hand, in solemn conclave they resolve to boycott him before the evening is much older, Gray saying with disgust: "Those girls are in a measure under our protection, boys, and there would be less danger to them were a wild tiger let loose amongst them, than a creature such as this Pickford; such men give a savor of truth to the saying, that 'all men are ravening wolves, whatever their clothing may be.'"

At 7:30, the same evening, our pretty Nell in a fetching gown of soft, white bunting, the front width embroidered in groups of water lilies by her own artistic fingers, with elbow sleeves and open Medici collar, discarding ornaments, save a bunch of water-lilies on the bodice, her golden hair in heavy coil and fluffy bangs, trips down to the boulders to the rear of Idle Bower, her hand in Gray's, and seats herself among the rugs in the tiny craft and away they go,—a baneful look in the nasty eyes of Pickford, who, glass in hand, watches them from the Point where he thought to trap them.

An hour later, as they return, an ecstatic light in the eyes of Gray, Nell all sweetness, the two, perfectly happy in each other, come slowly up from the rocks and lounge in a delightful *tête-a-tête* on the small verandah at Idle Bower, waiting till Hazel kisses baby good-night, and puts a few artistic touches to Maud's blue costume and her own pretty gown in plaided surah.

"Tell me, sweet, that you wish with me, that we sat here together as loving husband and wife, with no more partings. Ah, Nellie, Nellie, I dread your leaving me for Broadacres."

"I dread it too, Rod. I used to be so brave because I did not care for anyone but Hazel. But now, dear, and this evening especially, I fear I scarce know what, and it is, I know, the dread of going away from you, but don't let us think of it, let us only think that we yet are near," and her rose mouth is to his ear, "near, and loving."

Here Betsy appears at the door, flapping a towel at a something flying in her face, and now about the heads of the lovers. Nell starts to her feet with a little scream.

"Oh, the horrid thing! Betsy, Betsy, it's a bat!"

"Yes, Miss Nell, it is ane o' they birds o' ill omen; it had been in your window, but that I kept it out wi' the screen.

I dinna ken, dearie, but I fear me sair it's the master o' Broad-acres."

Nell tries to laugh, but a tremor runs through her as they all stroll up to the music hall, where Hazel, playing the hostess makes Maud White personally acquainted with any one worth knowing, Pickford forcing himself upon the recollection of Mrs. Leary, as confidential clerk of her uncle, and though disgusted with him for his unwelcome and persistent attentions to Nell, is persuaded to polka with him. The next dance is the "Wenonah" waltz, and the lovers, Nell and Rod., emerge from a seat on the cool lawn, and from the shrine of Erato come to that of Terpsichore. As they saunter to the music hall, they see the blue-ribbon bar full of women, whom, much to Gray's disgust and the veiled amusement of Nell, are being treated by Pickford, with Rice's money, for though not one of the especial summer girl of any of Gray's friends are among the number, still there are plenty of the Printon set, who are ready to chunt his praises for his bon-bons. Yes, Pickford is a man who knows how to propitiate Grundy, afterwards taking his reward in a waltz with gay Mrs. James of Belleville; after which Nell, though loathing the contamination, redeems her promise."

"At last!" he says, holding her tightly, his stale breath mingling with hers fresh as the morning.

"Don't, Mr. Pickford, I just *hate* to be held so tight."

"No, you don't, you little warm-hearted passion-flower, you just love to be held so; and if you will only dance with me every night you are here, you will not look at any other man but me."

"You are a horrid man, and I'll not dance again with you."

"Oh yes, you will, you little Venus, you'll come and have some refreshments with me, and sit out the next dance with me outside. Now, don't we step beautifully together?"

"Yes, you dance fairly well; give the devil his due," she says, with saucy reluctance.

"Yes, yes, it would be to all my queries, my little enchantress: if I only had half a chance I would very soon hear you say yes to that little proposal of mine that you treated with such scorn a year ago."

"Oh, let me go, I am tired—of you."

"No, you are not. It's because that great calf, Philbee, is watching you ; are you not beginning to love me best, even now ?" and his oily black head is bent to almost touch hers.

At this juncture Spindle comes in hurriedly, engineering his way through the maze of waltzers.

"Say ! Miss Carew ! Miss Carew !" he calls, making a trumpet of his hands. "Mr. Pickford !" but the cunning fellow is blind and deaf.

"What is it, Mr. Spindle ?" asks Hazel, who, resting in the dance, stands with McCullough and talks to Gray. "What do you want Miss Carew for ?"

"I have a telegraph message, Mrs. Leary, from Toronto, and one for her partner, too !"

"A telegram !" exclaims Gray, with a start.

"For a fact, sir."

Hazel, coming from a noble race, from a race of soldiers, though trembling with instinctive dread, nerves herself for battle, speaks firmly and quietly, as they are again around.

"Nell, dear, come here at once."

"What is it, Hazel ? but I am glad you called me, or Mr. Pickford would never have let me go," and her lovely little face turns from one to the other, the violet eyes resting lastly on the grave face of her lover.

"What is it, Rod ?"

"A telegram, Nell. Shall I open it for you ?"

"Yes, yes, quick !"

He reads, but cannot bear the news, and in a half-dazed way hands it open to her, just as Pickford, having read the one to himself, turns his nasty eyes devouringly upon her as she reads from her uncle :

"As your guardian, I *command* you to return to Toronto by *first* train to-morrow, as also to *finally* cut that fellow from Ottawa ; discharge Betsy, who has been unfaithful to her trust. Mr. Pickford will see you safe to Toronto, where I shall meet you.

PHILIP TWETE CAREW."

Without a word, only one despairing look at Rod, Nell falls back in a dead faint, to be caught, as fate would have it, in the willing arms of Pickford, and society, on tip-toe, see in his dusky face of sin, that the lovely burden he carries to Idle Bower has taken his heart captive ; and but that Gray, whom

he inwardly curses, stalks a tall, grave, sentinel beside him ; he would have desecrated her sweet, pure mouth with passion's kisses, and of a truth he does steal a hasty kiss, as the watchful eyes of Rod. are withdrawn but for one instant, as he had stepped forward to open the door of Idle Bower for Hazel and Doctor Helen, which Betsy, in her fear of the bat, had closed.

"O, waes me ! waes me ! my beautiful lassie, my ain dearie," and Betsy, throwing her apron over her face, weeps like a child, while Hazel and Doctor Helen kneel by the lounge and apply vinegar and water to the palms of the now listless little hands, and to the lips, Hazel's woman wit trying in vain to find some plausible excuse to rid the cottage of Pickford so that Gray and herself may discuss this dreadful telegram.

"I have heard hot brandy and water is often efficacious," she says, half-distractedly. "Will you endeavor to procure a little from the hotel, Mr. Pickford?" As he very reluctantly leaves, he casts an evil glance at Gray. Maud White, Doctor Helen and Tims are now stationed outside the door to prevent his intrusion. Alone, Hazel, with one despairing look at Gray's hopeless face, laying her head on the pillow beside Nell, bursts into tears. The powerful sympathy between poor Nell and herself seems to have a subtle influence, for coming partially out of the dead faint, though her heart scarcely beats, not stirring the lilies lying on the poor, grief-stricken heart, she says, in faintest gasps :

"Betsy, *please* keep nasty Pickford away."

"I will, dearie. Wae's me, Mistress Hazel, the puir lassie is off again. I'll just gang out an' watch for Mr. Pickford, he waur never nigh my young leddy's heart."

Outside, she locks the door, putting the key in her pocket, and planting her tall form on the door-step. In a few moments Pickford is in sight. With a swagger of importance, he says, with his hand on the handle :

"Any change? I can't open the door. I recognize you as one of the servants from Broadacres. Has the deuced lock a catch? Open it."

"Na, na, sir. I'll just tuk' the brandy frae ye my ain sel' and gie it to Mistress Leary."

Something in her tone igniting his ire afresh, kindled before

by the knowledge that Gray invariably occupied some coign of vantage.

"You had better admit me quietly, woman, or I shall report you."

"Dinna bluster, sir, but gie me the brandy and gang awa' quietly."

"That's it, Betsy, spoken like a man," says Tims, the presence of the two girls, each trembling like an aspen leaf, alone keeping him quiet.

"Will you, please, give *me* the bottle. This lengthy swoon is dangerous," asks Dr. Helen, softly.

"I am sorry to refuse a lady, but I am acting for Miss Carew's guardian, and I should have the nearest place beside her," he says, in mad anger.

"Give me that bottle, sir, or ane o' these young leddys will gang up to the hotel for anither."

"Come," says Doctor Helen, taking Maud's hand.

"Here, take the bottle," he says, angrily, "but you must tell me when Miss Carew revives. I shall be in the music hall; as for you, woman, Mr. Carew has discharged you by telegram, and Miss Nell goes to Toronto to-morrow, in my charge."

Betsy stands the shot bravely, and, as she turns quickly to open the door, says mentally, "you bat, you bat."

In half an hour Nell opens her eyes and sits up, making room for Rod. and Hazel on either side of her, saying brokenly:

"Come here, Betsy, sit there, you look tired. I have a dreadful telegram from uncle Carew, he commands me to leave here by first train from Bloomfield, on to-morrow, and that I am to go without you, Betsy, and that nasty Pickford is to accompany me."

"But that maunna be, lassie, I canna live wi' out you, lassie," she says, tremblingly, though withal determinedly pressing her hands to her bosom, the edges of the miniature case pressing into her spare flesh. "And ye maunna travel wi' yon man wi' na ane to stan' between you an' his evil tongue, for ye ken he will mak' lo'e to ye an' mak' his sel' offensive generally. Na, na, I'll just gang an' pack my kit an' your ain, lassie, my young leddy must na travel unattended."

"Then you think I must obey him?"

"Yes, Miss Nell, I do that, he is your guardian, ye ken."

At that moment Burt Moore brought down from the hotel a telegram from Col. Gray, which read thus:--

"OTTAWA.

"TO RODERICK R. P. S. GRAY, Esq.

"Bad news from P. T. C., Toronto. Come home and consult. With love and sympathy from Mary and self, to Hazel and poor dear Nell. Yours,

"ROSS STUART GRAY."

At eleven, p.m., Gray leaves Idle Bower for Rollickers' Dene, his handsome head bent to the storm which has obscured his summer sky.

Poor Nell, sleeping in Hazel's arms, at five o'clock is up, and robed in her pretty gold-braided travelling suit, rising early to spend an hour with her lover.

"No, not to the Point, Rod., dear, though I should dearly love to sit once more in our little cove. *Once more*, ah, my own dear Rod., are those prophetic words?" and she looks up at him sadly.

"No dearest, they are not," he says, though with inward despair, "for we will come here again to this dear old spot as wedded lovers. Yes, little one, my heart is breaking at losing you in this way, but be brave, pet, though the law gives your guardian terrific power over you. *Always* remember this, Nellie, that I only live for our re-union. Come, sweet, don't fear that man Pickford: we will go down to the Point, the water and sunshine will be a subtle tonic for you, my own wee stricken birdie."

One, sadly sweet, never to be forgotten hour, they spend at the beautiful Point. Returning, they find Hazel ready to accompany them to Bloomfield, her sweet face showing keenest sorrow at this cruel termination to the halcyon summer days now past.

Nell makes a brave offer to swallow some breakfast.

On the platform dozens of the guests are assembled to see our pretty Nell off, and many tears are shed, for the bright little witch is leaving against her will. All the "boys" have a sweet something to say, each wishing they stood in Gray's shoes. Mementos of her sojourn at the Sandhills are offered,

making a big rustic basketful—sand, shells, ferns and water lilies, with wild flower-roots.

Hazel and Gray, quicker than thought, spring into the carriage, Gray, lifting Nell in between them as previously arranged, and from the seat into which Pickford has planted himself.

During the eight miles of enchanting drive, Nell's tears fall at intervals silently, while taking long looks at the dear faces on either side of her, too full of grief to talk; Hazel's sweet, low voice endeavors to bring strength and comfort to the poor little witch.

"Nell, dear, I shall write uncle, though it must be your own poor little stricken self that will soften his heart, for he thinks me but poor stuff, so you see, dear, you must be brave for two this time, yourself and Roderick."

At Bloomfield, the Central Ont. rail on time, 9:30 a.m., there is just time to see to the luggage, and seat Nell, Betsy and Poll in her cage comfortably—as far as the material counts—in a parlor car, when the last words must be said.

"I shall telegraph uncle that you have started and Betsy with you, from whom you will not be separated," says Hazel.

"Yes, do, and write me often, Hazel, dear, and love to Veteran Lodge. Oh what shall I do without you! I am glad you will have Maud till Saturday, don't fret," she whispers, "this child will be right down brave."

"Listen, pet," says Gray, bending down his handsome, sorrowful face to her ear, "I go in with Hicks to Picton, as soon as we return, thence to Kingston to take the rail for the Capital to consult with father. In any case I shall go to Toronto in a day or two and see your uncle."

"When, Rod. dear, what day, quick, the train is moving?"

"Sunday morning I shall call at Broadacres; God bless and protect you," and shaking hands with Betsy he leaves the car.

Pickford, playing the detective, having heard the appointment for Sunday, eager to give a parting stab of pain to his rival, follows, and on the platform hisses from behind his demoralised moustache.

"Take my advice, Philbee, and spark some other girl, Sunday, Carew and I will look after—" and a mean forefinger points to the car, "the little charmer and I had love passages before she ever saw you."

And the fire-horse shrieks and snorts as away they go! A dainty pocket-handkerchief flutters from Nell's hand, as she cries "Rod! Rod!" "Rod! Rod!" echoes the parrot, and he sees the beautiful little face full of grief, and pale from the effects of last night's fainting fit and insomnia, the violet eyes straining to get the last glimpse from the open window.

Hazel picks up the small square of finest linen, Nell's monogram worked by her own deft fingers at one side.

"Rod., don't watch till our darling is out of sight, it is unlucky."

"I *must*," he says, his red cap pushed back, then taken off.

But they are out of sight, swallowed up and hidden in the—far away. With a heavy sigh he turns to her.

"Give it to me," and the little handkerchief is pressed to his lips, and put in an inner breast pocket of his white flannel coat.

On the return drive, sitting on the fourth seat behind Mills, they converse in whispers, Gray telling her of the vile parting words of the depraved Pickford.

"The wretch!" she says, indignantly, "I always knew from Nell of what a beast he is, but this caps everything."

They had much to say, and the return drive proves all too short. Alighting at the platform in front of the Surf Beach House, they hasten down the walk to Idle Bower, Gray going on to Rollickers' Dene to pack his traps, Moore, Tims, and Spry assisting, truly grieved at the departure of the little queen of their revels, and wishing Gray good luck.

"Had that cad Pickford remained here another day," burst out Moore, "notwithstanding my additional inches, I would have made jelly of him!"

"Do you know what some of the women are saying?" asks Tims, disgustedly, "that though he was a bit of a clip, he was so free-handed, they are quite cut up about his leaving."

"But none of the girls say so," says Spry, hastily.

"No, we have given them eye-openers as to the manner of cad he is, that's why."

"Look after the ladies at Idle Bower, boys," says Gray, hastening off, "and look me up at Toronto in Sept.—Canada Life," and with a hasty word with Hazel, and sympathetic hand-clasp, he is gone.

From Bloomfield to Toronto, Pickford chews the cud of a devilish gladness, as he muses at a respectful distance from Nell, on the parting stab he has given his rival, and plans a propinquity to Nell in the long drive from Trenton to Toronto.

Arriving at Trenton, in changing from Central Ont. rail to G. T. R. R., he contrives to first seat Betsy in another coach in charge of Poll, when he is supremely happy in close nearness to poor Nell, for whom there is no escape from his amorous talk and unwelcome attentions. For the fiftieth time ere reaching the Queen City, he says, unctuously :

"Now, wouldn't you rather marry me than that little match-end Rice ; yes, of course you would, my little Venus," and then more of the small banker's money would be put in circulation for a something to tickle the palate.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MASTER OF BROADACRES AT HOME.

"She is my property, was born beneath my father's roof,
Whose slave her mother was."

WISHING, yet dreading the meeting with her angry uncle ; wishing, so that she will be rid of Pickford ; dreading, not knowing what shape the Irish temper of Carew will cut up into. At the close of the afternoon the engine with its long line of coaches enters the Union station at Toronto, a disagreeable contrast, in its vitiated heat, in its dusky dirtiness, with its clamor of tongues and unmelodious noises, to the restful charm of the beautiful promontory of Prince Edward county that our travellers had only left this a.m.

Our poor little yellow-haired witch knows what mercy to expect on seeing the tall, handsome form of Carew, his face cold and hard as iron. Without a greeting to herself, he says to his clerk :

"Thank you, Pickford, stand here by Miss Carew, I shall attend to the luggage; give me the checks."

Betsy, now comes up with Poll, who calls out to the amusement of the loafers, "how do, Carew!"

"Come this way, Betsy, set the cage beside your mistress."

"Yes, master," and she follows obediently, supposing she is required to assist in picking out the luggage. But no, Carew has made other arrangements; hailing a hack, her small trunk being redeemed, the man mounts to the box. At the last moment, Carew, putting his head in at the door, says sternly:

"I discharged you by telegram. Mrs. Leary's meddling has returned you. However, when Miss Carew gives up this folly you have aided and abetted, I shall perhaps install you in your old position, on one condition, and *you know* I will be obeyed, this condition is that you don't *dare* to show your face at Broadacres, or attempt to hold communication with Miss Carew. Your board is paid for one month at the address, Riverside, which I have given the driver," and with a bang the door is fast and away she goes bound hand and foot to his iron will.

Returning to Nell's side, he says to his clerk, "I wish you would go round to the office, Pickford, remain there till six o'clock, lock up, and dismiss the clerks; and, mark me, bring any letters up to me at 9 a.m. Your holidays don't expire until Saturday night; for those two days I am going to place you in charge or on guard," he says, sternly, "at Broadacres. Here is a cheque in return for your faithfulness in the trust imposed upon you at those infernal Sandbanks."

Nell's heart sinks paralyzed with fear as her uncle turns to her, saying savagely:

"Take my arm through this blasted crowd." Pickford, with an exultant air and as if to bridge time till to-morrow, walks rapidly out of the station.

During the drive from the dépôt to Broadacres, Carew maintains a stern silence, while making a pretence of reading the *Evening News*, while poor Nell, regardless of the admiration she excites, gives herself up to despair.

Broadacres is at last reached, a medium-sized, modern red brick villa, with all the hoods, miniature pinnacles, and juttings out, which go to make up the very pretty whole in our

dwellings of to day, with a wilderness of broad acres in the rear, spacious lawn and carriage drive inside the stone curbing.

A new housemaid answers the door, who afterwards confides to the kitchen that it's downright ungrateful for anyone as beautiful as Mr. Carew's niece, and with such fine clothes to look as if she didn't care for aught.

Up-stairs in her own room, Nell bids the maid to bring her something on a tray, as her head aches and she will not go down to dinner.

On which the master of Broadacres sends word that he desires her presence in the library at 8:30.

Alone in her æsthetic bedroom, she sits tense and still, thinking out her unhappy condition, while the parrot on a tour of inspection, first, at the pretty white bed with its curtains of bolting cloth; on the head-post pair are embroidered scarlet poppies, at which Poll chuckles and pecks, the lower ones being pictured with morning glories in violet, pink and yellow. At the foot of the bedstead is a small square stool, on which at rising our pretty Nell seats herself, while encasing her small feet in dainty hose and slippers; a perfumed sachet at other times rests thereon, in which is neatly folded her robe-de-nuit, which is thus refreshingly odorous: on the sachet is embroidered the words—avaunt, every imp of wakefulness.

Poll, letting herself gingerly down the lower bed curtains, next climbs to the window seat and looks to the quiet outer world through the Madras peek-a-boo; next, muttering at Nell's quietude, climbs to the toilet table, lifts the stopper from a delicate china perfume bottle, takes a smell, plays awhile with the pretty nick-knacks, finally chuckling and laughing quietly at her own reflection, and at the many reflected wall ornaments and bric-a-brac on their respective brackets.

Nell, changing her travelling gown for a pretty house frock of white muslin, simply made, and with a wide blue ribbon sash tied in a large bow behind, her beautiful little face sad to the last degree, she descends the thickly carpeted stairs, down the upholstered banisters of which Poll hops and runs.

In the library, the master of Broadacres, ascertaining that cook and housemaid are, the one out with her young man, the other asleep on the kitchen door-step, placing a chair for Nell, says, coldly:

"I was once of the opinion that you had some common sense, but your abject folly at those blasted Sandbanks proves to me that you have it in you to act as idiotic as any of your sex. This fellow with whom you fooled has a most impertinent father, who actually writes from Ottawa to me, presuming on a long ago acquaintance with my dead brother, *knowing* of your approaching marriage, that forsooth owing to your irreproachable birth, he is quite pleased—confound him!—at the proposal his son has made you; irreproachable birth!" he says, in a foaming rage, "I'll attend to your *irreproachable* birth. You belong to *me!*" he thunders, "and you'll wed the man I have chosen for you, and who has no such infernal notions in his head," and his fist comes down to the desk emphatically.

"But uncle Philip, I, Nell Carew, am a lady by birth, and I, too, prefer to marry a gentleman, rather than the son of a cobbler," she says, proudly, though with latent fear.

"Oh you would, would you? Well, this is all I've got to say on the matter: I am your guardian, and until they or you can prove, 'mine own is not mine own,' mine own will I retain. I give you to-morrow, Friday, to think over this folly, and if you are still infected with this nonsense, I shall place you virtually a prisoner, somewhere, until you become of age—two years and one half—a nice cheerful time you will have, I must say," and his lip curls. "I bet my life your mad folly will have time to cool, and the partner in your idiocy will have spare time to hunt up another prospective heiress, and give out that 'tis her irreproachable birth is the bait. I have no more to say to you, except that if you don't marry Rice on the day arranged for your wedding, which is a month from Tuesday, I shall destroy the will in your favor, settlements, etc., and when you emerge from retirement, you will be the proud possessor of the clothes you stand in. That is all! Go! to-morrow evening I shall again interview you. Go, I say!"

Pale as her white frock, staggering with fear, she rises to obey; at the door she turns as if to appeal to his feelings, but he waves his hand impatiently, his face purple with anger.

Wild thoughts of flight to Ottawa fill Nell's mind, but to what avail? No, she belongs to her uncle for the weary

length of time, till of age. How to bridge that time occupies her thoughts all night, she, who has hitherto only had to clap her small, firm hands when a genii would appear to do her bidding.

Rising early with unformed plans of flight, and with a nervous fear that Betsy, not having tucked her in last night, is, perhaps, horrible thought ! not near to comfort her—turning the handle of her door, she finds it locked on the outside.

Sitting on the side of the bed, covering her face with her hands, for once regardless of disfigurement, allowing the tears to rain from her eyes.

Poll comes out of her cage, climbs to her shoulders and sniffles, saying, "poor Poll, poor Poll."

"Go back to your cage, Poll, I am going to write to Hazel and Rod., and tell them Carew is bad, bad." But how am I to post it ? she muses. I am virtually a prisoner, nevertheless it is in some sort a relief, so she pours out the pent-up agony in written words, both to Gray at Ottawa and Hazel at the Sandbanks..

When, throwing herself on the bed, nature triumphs, and Somnus without resistance holds sway. She does not awaken until 9:30 a.m., when, starting up, she comes to the knowledge that 'tis Pickford's cockney accent she hears coming in from her open windows ; he speaks with her uncle in the bedroom of the latter, whose windows are on the front wall of the villa, and now her uncle speaks irritably and hastily, only a word coming to her at intervals : "Watch her movements, I *shall* be obeyed, and when I say she is not to *dare* leave Broadacres to day, she will, at her peril. I am glad you happened to hear that fellow, Gray—"

"Philbee, you mean," breaks in Pickford.

"No, no, his progenitor, who is so proud of his son's birth, tells me that, through some besotted folly not worth repeating, this same *well-bred* son of his used his mother's name of Philbee at those infernal Sandbanks ; but, as I was saying, I am glad you overheard the fellow name his intention of calling on Sunday, for does she not come to her senses I shall have her away from here by that time."

"I have a something to say to you, Carew, which will perhaps be a surprise. I feel sure were you to put me in

Rice's place, as he stands towards your niece, you would have no trouble at all, for I have reason to think she cares more for me than any of them," he says, unblushingly, as he twirls his black, demoralized moustache.

"Eh, you don't say so! Women are queer fish," which remark Pickford being in doubt how to take, says, mirthfully:

"You are right, Carew, as my unlimited knowledge of them has proven; however, Miss Carew has beauty sufficient to fire any number of hearts, and so what do you say? I have been of use to you at the office; how much our business could be enlarged were I the proud husband of your niece."

"No, no, Pickford, it can't be; Rice has my word; all our business arrangements are a *fait accompli*, and, mark me, they will be married tight enough on a month from Tuesday, as sure as my name is Carew. Rice returns on Monday for a day to see her, before he makes the run to London, Eng., on important business; should she not have recovered from this folly ere to-morrow night, she will be far away by Rice's return on Monday, and sane again by the time he is back from England: fortunately her greatest charm for him is her proud undemonstrativeness. There is my car! look sharp till my return at 5 p.m.," and boarding an electric car he is off for the city.

All Pickford's blandishments in the form of tender little notes, bouquets and fruit—with the money of Rice—either slipped under her door by himself or sent by the maid, are of no avail in causing Nell to come to him, and so he scores a point by crossing the road and paying court to Addie Thomas, the pork heiress.

Summoned to the library after dinner, at which Pickford had made one, he and Carew discussing Clarke's successor to the mayoralty chair, and the newest street car charter; so covering Nell's silence during the waiting by the servant, afterwards Pickford makes his report and then guilty trips to the city to divert himself after the—to him, all too innocent day.

Up in Nell's bedroom, "Rod., Nell, poor Poll, Polly," had cried the parrot, evidently chafing at the dispiriting change from the gay chatter at the Sandbanks.

"Yes, Poll," whispers Nell, softly, as caressing her to her own fluttering heart beneath the white muslin of her blouse,

as she descends the stairs on her uncle's summons to the library.

"Poor Rod., poor Nell," she whispers, her mind set on braving her uncle, as her rose mouth brushes the feathers of the bird which the hand of her lover has caressed. "We will see dear Rod. on Sunday, Poll, you and I, when bad uncle Carew is *saying* his prayers—*not praying*—in church," and turning into the softly carpeted corridor back of the drawing room, entering the library, her uncle, who has neglected his pipe for fear of its soothing effect, lifts his eyes from the columns of the *Illustrated London News*, and steeling his heart against the lovely picture she makes, the baby waist of her white muslin frock girdled with a broad, green silk sash, her pretty bare arms encircling Poll, her beautiful little face resolute in its defiance, set in its aureole of golden hair, from which after dinner she has taken the pins, allowing it to fall almost to her knees.

"Well, Miss Carew," he says, ironically, "have you come to tell me you are ashamed of this folly?"

"No, uncle Carew, I have not, I am going at least to try and save my honorable name by giving it into the safe keeping of Roderick Gray."

"That is a decision of which you will soon tire," he says, in blazing wrath; "and now all I have to say is, that you must pack one trunk with necessary clothing, and be ready to leave the city with me in the morning."

"And if I refuse," she says, stunned at the fact that Gray will not find her on Sunday.

"You dare not!" he says, his handsome face ablaze with wrath, as he points towards the door. "I am sick and tired repenting that I control your movements until you become of age, moreover, if at the expiration of three weeks you are still idiotic enough to continue this line of conduct, I shall take you across the ocean and place you at school in France for the next two years and a half, to teach you obedience;" at this he staggers in his excitement. Nell, dropping Poll, rushes towards him—"Uncle you are ill!"

"Hand me some brandy, and go! You and your infernal folly will be the death of me."

CHAPTER XIII.

AMID THE SPIRES A GIRL-FACE!

"Come my own, my sweet,
Come my own, my sweet,
Come, love, come,
I am here at the gate alone!"



SABBATH morn and the spired-crowned city.
What a goodly multitude furnish with many odours
and shades of sanctity the streets and avenues of fair
Toronto.

So thinks a young fellow, strong of limb, an athlete in bearing, carrying his head high, determination in the firm lines of his mouth; yea, in the way in which he plants his foot on the flagged pavement, and in the way, steady of purpose, he passes briskly through the crowds. One would think from his skilful manner of dodging and eluding, fencing successfully, so to speak, with the crowd, that he has come from being a denizen of a larger city than this our Queen City; but no, he has registered the night just past away, at the 'Arlington,' as Roderick R. P. S. Gray, Ottawa.

And so we recognize him as our pretty Nell's lover. But on he goes, and many eyes follow him till past their range, when others seem to take pleasure in the rapidly vanishing form of the tall, handsome young athlete.

His straw hat, a-la-mode, is pushed back from the broad, white forehead, and the blue eyes glance somewhat carelessly at the motley throng he swiftly passes.

The air is laden with the music of church bells, the dear old chimes of St. James' Cathedral coming to the ear like angel voices in a far-away choir, and the pity of it is that each mortal as he treads his way puts a different interpretation on the words from Holy Writ from which the chime notes emanate. But thus it is in the age of many creeds! On, and ever on, goes Roderick Grey, through the groups of hastening worshippers, ever and anon hearing scraps of conversation to the accompaniment of the twitter, twitter of the sparrows, the hastening footfalls, all blending with the memory of a sweet girl-voice,

which brings anew eager hastening strides, for his heart hungers to hear Nell's voice again.

On, and ever on, through handsome King-street, gay with superb equipages, freighted with fashionably robed citizens going to worship at the shrine of a Saviour who, when on this same earth, was the meek and lowly Nazarene!

On, and ever on, now treading his way up far-stretching Yonge-street, passing through this great avenue of shops now closed to over 200,000 citizens, for is not this the city of churches?

On, still on, goes Roderick Gray, now meeting groups of Episcopalians; one cannot mistake them, he thinks, with a grim sense of humor, with their exclusive air.

On, on, through the lively groups of Methodists.

On he goes, passing thoughtful Presbyterians with their fundamental air, rubbing shoulders, too, with Israelites on a holiday, for to them this is not the Lord's Day, they still wait in the outer court!

At Trinity-square his steps are retarded, for churchmen, with glad faces, enter here.

At Wilton-avenue he is compelled to skirt the crowd by taking the middle of the street, for a throng of eager-faced people turn and cross, cross and turn, from every point to listen to the rector of All Saints and the pastor of Bond-street.

At Gerrard-street more jostling, for other spires point heavenward, this time by adult Baptism, and the Baptist, with complete satisfaction, treads his way.

On, still on; up, and ever up our busy Yonge-street goes manly Roderick Gray, a beautiful little face ever topping every spire.

On, still on, wondering, in a half absorbed way, if all those people who have "waxen fat, who shine," many of them tailor-made, be really and in truth Christians.

On, still on; ever, and ever north he goes, meeting Faith Curists and Plymouth Brethren with no proud looks.

Christian Scientists, too, few and far between, 'tis true, but each wearing their air of superior enlightenment.

Salvation Army soldiers, men and women, increase as he reaches Bloor-street, busy and hopeful beating the drum.

But, Roderick Gray is distancing us, we see him on ahead switch-

ing with eager strides the grass on either side of the plank walk in the near vicinity of beautiful Mount Pleasant Cemetery ; his quickened heart-beats, as he nears Broadacres, add to the glow in his cheeks and the tender light in his brown eyes, giving no thought to barriers, which may have been raised between his meeting with his loved Nell.

On, still on, his head thrown proudly back, for is he not soon to hold the loveliest, cleverest girl in the world to his heart !

His step grows more elastic, for graceful maple and dark horse chestnut trees now shade the sun from his path, and the sweet odour from the numerous flower-beds on the lawns he passes, above all, the knowledge that he must be close on Broadacres, are a subtle tonic to him, exhilarating his spirits as the oldest wine would fail to do.

Yes, here is little picturesque Christ Church, where, even now, her uncle Carew may, on bended knee, be penitent for the grief he has caused Nell, and, perhaps, is even now ready to grant his blessing on their union.

Broadacres at last ! Yes, a meet and fitting home for his beautiful Nell. The flagged walk to the stone steps is quickly passed. Eagerly scanning the early English windows, the lower ones set in Credit Valley stone, of which the wall is built, the quaint upper casements coming from red tiles and bricks, but the face he hungers to see is not watching for him. She will come to meet him at the door, and with nervous haste he presses the electric button, when, lo ! the depraved face of Pickford answers his ring ; his exultant expression bodes no good, and poor Gray's heart sinks, and for the moment he is speechless.

"What ! no word, Philbee, *alias* Gray," he says, insolently, carefully keeping his cigarette from dying out, depositing his highly-flavored French novel on a hall chair, "your tongue was wont to wag at both ends at the Sandbanks."

Not trusting himself to reply, Gray touches a bell, at which a maid appearing, with an effort to speak calmly, he asks :

"Is Miss Carew at home ?"

"No, sir, she is away."

"How do you mean away ? Not out of the city ?" he asks, in nervous excitement he cannot altogether suppress.

"Yes, sir."

"Rod ! Rod !" calls poor caged Poll, on hearing Gray's voice.

"Is not Mr. Carew at home? Where is Betsy, the housekeeper?"

"Mr. Carew is at church, sir, and the housekeeper has left."

"Is she with Miss Carew? Where are they gone?"

"I don't know, sir."

All this time Pickford, with his hands in the pockets of his smoking jacket, leans against a curtained door-post and laughs impertinently.

"Floored at last, Philbee, *alias* Gray. You didn't get the deal this time, eh? I wish you a pleasant little walk to town; our city fathers are pious men, and won't run Sunday cars," he says, mean and enough to kick a man when he is down.

Gray, drawing himself up to his magnificent height, says, proudly, as, his heart aching, he turns from Broadacres:

"You are too contemptible to call out, though I feel very much inclined to make a football of you."

"Ha! ha! ha!" jeers Pickford, banging the door.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THUS FAR SHALT THOU GO AND NO FARTHER."

Though a trip to joyous Hamilton is for Scot, for Celt or Saxon, a bonnie trip for a', our pretty Nell goes thither with a heavy heart.

NEARLY four weeks elapse and poor Nell awaits at Buffalo the arrival of her uncle Carew to bring her back to Broadacres, subdued at last to his will of iron.

One cannot wonder at the little spoiled beauty giving way, though her love for Roderick Gray has purified and ennobled her character. To be so rudely torn from his companionship and imprisoned at an American boarding school, with no communication with those she loves, separated for the first time from the devoted Betsy, the lady principal of the school

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strict in her surveillance, having been informed by Carew that his reason for placing Miss Carew in her charge is, that, as a beautiful young heiress, she has become the prey of an adventurer, who, travelling under an assumed name, has endeavored to entrap her into a marriage.

Poor Nell finally gives in, not being morally strong enough to face the prospect of banishment to Paris, France, for the next two and a half years.

Her uncle meets her without demonstration of affection, but with gentlemanly politeness, attending to her comfort while travelling to Toronto. Nearing the city, he says :

"Rice wished very much to come up this evening, but I told him he had better wait until to-morrow. He will then dine with us. Afterwards, we shall drive to the city and go to the Academy of Music," Nell shudders, "and remember, Nell, no recoiling from Rice. Be as you were to him, he will be satisfied. He rather enjoys your pretty airs of hauteur, however, I think you can afford to relax a little, as you will be his wife within one week."

At the Union Station Nell, hardening herself, greets Rice—though with inward loathing—much as she has been accustomed to do, and very much as a queen might a too aspiring subject.

"Ah! I am glad to see no sun-burn after your prolonged outing," says the small banker, who drives with them to King-street, "you look as spick and span as a London or New York belle, only more to my taste. When I contrast the good time I have been having to yours in that pokey hole in Prince Edward county, I pity you, but I shall show you a bit of life on our wedding trip, and shall enjoy your fresh, innocent surprise at not only the sights of New York city, but the mortification in the faces of the belles when they know I am married," and touching his fingers to his lips, and his cane to his silk hat, the small dude makes for his quarters at the Arlington.

After dinner the same evening, and while the master of Broadacres sips his toddy with a couple of men in the library over a game at cribbage, our poor Nell sobs out her grief in the faithful arms of Betsy, and in the privacy of her own apartment, having just read a letter from Hazel dated two weeks ago, telling her of the death of baby Maston; also a

scrawl of a few days ago from Leary, stating that a sprained wrist together with fretting about baby's death, and her (Nell's) silence, has prevented Hazel from writing since.

"I just *hate* uncle Carew," she says between her sobs, and the pretty golden head presses the sharp edges of the miniature case into the lean chest of Betsy, "and all my own dear boy's, my own Rod's letters that I *know* he must have written, made a holocaust of, I suppose, or returned to him. I wish that I were dead, Betsy!"

And by a strange coincidence, as she speaks, between her sobs, of Gray's letters, Pickford is laughing himself ill in recalling the contents—for the benefit of Rice—of a letter received this day from Nell's lover, and which he has opened, the others having been returned by Carew.

"Try another glass of still hock, Pickford. Your droll way of putting that fellow's goneness on Nell, only whets my appetite for my little beauty. And you say he was a regular swell?"

"Yes, a regular tip-topper. No end of airs. By George, how he is sold!" and he slaps his degenerate knees.

"I'm glad I sent you down, Pickford, I see I must look after her. It has been money well spent, though it must have been a deuced bore to you to spend your holidays in such a hole. Gad! she looked splendid to-day. Won't I be proud to show her off. She sets off my style, too, being an out and out blonde," and he turns with a gratified glance towards the mirror. "I just dote on her grand airs. A lady born every inch of her."

At the same moment in her pretty bedroom at Broadacres, the parrot, overjoyed at Nell's return, climbs by bill and claw up the dainty pink skirts of her gown, poking her head under Nell's restless hand, calling, "poor Poll, Nell, Nell." For a few moments, she quietly caresses the bird, her pretty round chin on its feathers. Then starting to an upright position, a hard look coming to the beautiful little face, she says, rapidly pacing the room:

"I am a fool to cry! I shall meet my love yet, in spite of them all, and I am not going to spoil my beauty! Yes, you may stare in fright at me, Betsy, from *this moment* I am going to be downright bad, bad did I say, yes bad, but God

will not punish me, He will make uncle pay for it. You may take down my hair now, Betsy. Brush it and get me into my dressing gown, I am going to try if the 'Witch of Prague' can't hypnotise me into forgetting self."

"Will ye no just write 'til Mistress Leary, lassie, it always soothes ye, dearie?"

"No, Betsy, the die is cast, and the poor dear is prostrated with grief. As I am to be a joyous bride so soon, Mrs. Leary will excuse my giving up all my time to my loved Hamlet—Prince of Darkness."

"Dinna, dinna, lassie, it breaks my heart to hear ye; pray to the gude God to send you that peace that, aye, is the portion o' they who do their duty."

The day following is Saturday and brings an invitation from Mrs. Long, Maud White's mother, for Nell to spend Sunday at 'Moyvane,' the cottage at the Hamilton beach, as Maud wishes to make final arrangements, as she is to act as Nell's bridesmaid on the following Tuesday. The invitation is addressed to Mr. Carew, who, though unwilling to permit Nell's acceptance, deems it advisable to give in if she so desires.

Nell's spirit bounds at the thought of feeling her wings, even though tied by the string of thus far and no farther.

"Yes, uncle, I should like to go," she says, coldly.

"Very well. Betsy will go down with you to Geddes' wharf, Rice and myself will see you off—I have your word, the word of a Carew—that you will return by first boat on Monday. I shall telephone Maud's fiancée at the gas office to meet you and see you safe to the Dundas dummy," and taking his pipe in company with the *World* he indulges in a lounge on the piazza before taking an electric car down to the Wall-street of Toronto.

At half-past two in the bow of the handsome Clyde-built steamer *Modjeska* as she moves majestically through the waters of Lake Ontario, sits our own pretty Nell; "Kirsteen" lies unobtrusively upon her knee; her natty costume attracts many a feminine eye, while the whole *tout ensemble*, the lovely gem in its setting of blue, holds the gaze of a group of young fellows; but she sees not her fellow-passengers as, absorbed in thought, her gaze follows the rippling waves as she leans her slim form

on her folded arms upon the railing. She wears a sailor-blue straight full skirt, sort of blouse bodice with gold-braided vest, a jaunty cap of sailor-blue also braided with the glittering braid from under which the lovely blonde hair shows beneath: over her shoulder is slung a smart satchel of alligator skin just large enough to hold her novel, box caramels, pocket handkerchief, and tiny prayer-book—a thought of Betsy's.

But little cares our pretty Nell for appearance in the present, absorbed as she is in sorrowful thought of the loving heart she must never more lean upon, of the great love so rudely swept from out her life, of all she has lost in the love of Roderick Gray. She is quite ready to confess that daily companionship with Hamlet Rice I shall grow mean and bad, she thinks, no one seeing the tear-drops in the violet eyes.

And in the ever changing, ever beautiful panorama of land and water spread out before her she thinks of how Hazel, Gray, and she would have enjoyed it together: On one side lies the varied green of the woods with, as they pass Long Branch, Lorie Park, or other summer resorts, extensive lawns studded with maple, birch, oak, and pine trees with their grand old background of dense, dark woodland.

But just now Nell's mood is more in unison with the water view, and during the whole two hours' trip she turns from the gay excursionists to the more sympathetic water, its swish and splash recalling the happiest hours of her life at the rock-bound promontory, and she does not see the steamers as they pass, or that the lake is dotted with small and large craft, the ambitious pleasure yacht, the numerous row boats, or the bird-like sail boats.

Neither does she heed the exclamations of delight or expectation as the *Modjesku* nears joyous, enthusiastic, national-spirited Hamilton, and comes upon her grand heights, her beautiful beach, and enters picturesque Burlington Bay, such scenery filling the most wooden soul with delight and a positive joyousness in living!

On her arrival, Alec Burns, Maud's fiancée, is quietly attentive, seeing her safely on board the Dundas dummy: Maud, always thoughtful for Nell's comfort has given him a Sunday holiday, feeling that were he to come out to the Beach as

usual the sight of their mutual happiness would make her own sorrow more poignant.

So that leaving Mrs. Long in company with the four dots, as also of her favorite Christian Scientist journals, the two girls, avoiding the cottagers, wander to a secluded nook with only Nature as listener and the broad lake at their feet.

"My heart aches for you and poor Rod," Maud says, her arm around her, "but I don't think you could have lived through that dreadful banishment to France; you would have just lain down and died, dear."

"That's just it, Maud; I feel sometimes as if I shall not live long, any way; my head aches nearly all the time, and yet I feel very wicked at times and as if I shall live to tempt Rod to run off with me when I get the settlement from uncle Carew," she says wearily, her beautiful little face full of her heart ache.

The following morning, ere starting by the dummy for Hamilton, she says to Mrs. Long, who is to see her board the *Macassau*:

"I wish I had some bromide for my headache, it would relieve it so, and I *cannot* stand it with this horrible marriage in view; you have no bromide in the cottage, I suppose, Mrs. Long?"

"Nonsense, child," says the Scientist, "you lean on a miserable drug to banish your false belief in a headache, and you hug this false claim until you procure what in your error you again *imagine* to be a cure. If you wish I will give you a treatment, though I honestly tell you a headache is a purely imaginary evil."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Long, please treat me," and the golden bang is pushed back impatiently as the small hands press her smooth, white forehead.

And there and then, the Christian Scientist in the restful parlor at the cottage, the tumbling storm tossed waters outside, God and nature all around, there and then does Nell Carew sit from restfulness to quiet, under the spell of that silent treatment, the large woman sitting thoughtfully still, a strange look of power in her face.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM HANLAN'S ISLAND TO BROADACRES.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man."



N seeing Nell safe aboard the *Modjeska* for Hamilton, on a suggestion from Carew, heartily acquiesced in by Rice, that they should spend the Saturday half-holiday at Hanlan's Island, taking the ferry, *Mayflower*, in fifteen minutes they reach the commodious dock, in a rollicking humor at the approaching marriage of Nell to Rice on the following Tuesday.

The sons of Adam predominate on the extensive piazzas at Hotel Hanlan, for ever since those primitive days in which the oldest Adam strolled in the sun-warm gardens of Eden, wondering and wishing that Eve's curiosity would master her, so that he shall taste the apple he is thirsting for—ever since that day, whether the old Adam be largely within them or no, our men *will* have their holiday whether Eve share it with them or not; there will be other women if not their own especial Eve. And so it is on this the people's holiday, each wearing a holiday air, too, with best bib and tucker, for Jennie will meet her Jamie—the King-street dude will meet some society belle, for whom he has a rose in his button-hole.

Groups of snails are there also, in full feather, digging in the sand, or into the capacious lunch bag, for the ozone from the lake is a peerless appetizer.

And what with the rippling of the waters, the laughter of the snails, the strolling musicians, the gay operetta in the pavilion, the twirling of the merry-go-round, the bang of the shooting galleries, the swish through the air of the elevated switch-back, every taste is catered to, and tired business men, capitalists and professional men, from their coign of vantage on the piazzas, jutting out from the different flats at Hotel Hanlan, forget to be tired, as, turning their heads as if on a

pivot, forget self in watching the ever-changing, ever-moving, gayly-plumaged crowds of people.

"Jove! what a bee-hive!" exclaims Carew.

"Yes," replies Cameron, a city man, who is seated near, "and all busy plucking a little honey after a week of work. This Saturday half-holiday is full of sweets for us all."

"Look at those red-heads!" cries Carew. "Fresh fra' the land o' heather, Cameron, I bet my life; see them stare at those niggers as they sing, 'Roll the ole chariot along.' There's a twang about those old plantation songs that 'catch on' with the crowd."

"Not with me," says Rice, hastily, "If I were a nigger I would spit them out of my mouth as recalling my slavish days."

"Time! time!" cries Carew. "Not so fast, young man. What think you, Cameron, of our friend here spouting so bravely, and he himself to become a slave of the ring on next Tuesday?"

"We'll hear his views a year from this date; 'when found make a note on,'" said the Scotchman, drily, tossing a baubee into the hat of an Italian harpist. "See, Carew, there goes one of our biggest barley exporters, come over from the city to dry his tears over the McKinley Bill, though he tells me he ran ever so many trains full from the West, labelled, 'Rush me through, McKinley's after me.' They were well over the line in time. I tell you what it is, Carew, we'll never stand steady on our pins till we get free trade with the U. States. A fine team like Edgar and Mulock ought to do something for the country, though I know you don't think so."

"No team now, Cameron: Edgar is bowled out, thanks for small mercies, but labelled 'unrestricted reciprocity.' I saw nothing to ornament the public highway in such a team, and all your Scotch eloquence can't convince me that our best interests would not be jeopardized were we to have this hydra-headed monster a *fait accompli*; but politics avaunt! I am in a holiday humor, and as luck will have it, there are our neighbors, Addie Thomas, the pork heiress, and her aunt, Miss Pall, and if that handkerchief isn't a Canadian signal to join them, then I am no follower of the chieftain; and now for a bit of fun. Off with us, Rice, 'quicker than a feather

would search in Hades.' Does your pulse beat that way, Cameron?"

"No, I never astonish my stomach with ice cream, which always goes with the lasses; but go on, Carew, you have no wife to curtain-lecture you on the extra glass o' Scotch whisky you'll have to take as a night-cap to cure the effects of your gallantry. I'll see you on Monday about that property near the new court-house, and the Ashbridge syndicate. Away with you."

"All right, I am your man and Miss Pall's for the next hour. Is she not lucky?"

Addie Thomas, who has been impatiently awaiting their approach, immediately fastens herself upon the small bunker.

"Which way?" he asks, not ill-pleased at her pronounced joy at meeting him.

"Oh, anywhere! but, no, we will go back over there on the lakeside bench; we shall be more by ourselves. Go slow, I wish aunt and Mr. Carew to walk in front of us."

"Addie! Addie!" calls her aunt. "Mr. Carew wishes us to go back to Hanlan's for an ice, and I feel as if one would be doubly refreshingly cold and white after that greasy lot of warbling colored people we have been mixed up in a crowd with."

But she knows full well what reply she will receive from the young woman, who has been all but asking Rice to be her life companion for the past three years.

"We have been in twice already, Mr. Carew, but take aunt, and if she proves too sweet for anything, blame it on the ice cream. Hanlet and I will wait for you on the sand-bar, but you needn't put yourselves about to hasten after us, you know."

"Yes, we know," says Carew, looking into the carefully tinted face of his companion, as they retrace their steps to Hotel Hanlan. "Constancy, thy name is woman: in yonder case: we men are not often so blessed."

"Now, Mr. Carew, you know you don't mean *blessed*, for you gentlemen so soon tire. Some of you are a very bad investment—in that way quite as fluctuating as your land markets."

"But not, Miss Pall, when we meet as fine property as yourself, an estate in itself, and one that I may say will never lose interest."

"And so you are actually going to be married in a few days, Hamlet," had said tall, lean, unwholesome-faced, overdressed Addie Thomas, in despairing and uncultured tones, maddening Rice by her want of repose, twirling her chain and bracelets, knocking the oxidized silver handle of her parasol to the toe of her boot, feeling the feathers of her eiffel bonnet, drawing the jewelled pins in and out of her drab hair.

"Some girls, Hamlet, with all my money, would not speak to you, but I still adore you, and can't help it; and you were in love with me before that bold jade, that stuck-up Carew girl came from the Forest City, and made such a dead set at you."

To this the small man consents by the eloquence of silence, though realizing full well how much running our proud Nell has made for him. After much spooning and fencing, Rice goes on to say:

"You see, my dear girl, I am a bit selfish in this. You have frequently warned me as to Nell's proud tantrums. Well, you see, if you are intimate at our house, I can throw your amiability in her face, and can turn to you for comfort," and though he does not mean one-tenth of what he has been cajoled into remarking, though her unpleasant mouth repels him, still her light blue eyes have kissed him so often in their *tête-à-tête*, that, with no opposite neighbors on the wide expanse of blue Ontario lake, their lips meet in the kiss that she has been asking for.

"Then we understand each other, Hamlet, lovey; you will be *sure* and look at me in Christ Church on fatal Tuesday. I shall dress as I am now, in heliotrope satin and gold and copper passementerie—here come Mr Carew and aunt; bother!" she says, breathlessly. "I shall sit on the west side of Christ Church, the second seat from the front."

Carew and Rice, pleading an appointment at Ward's Island, with affected regrets, make all speed back by a ferry from Island Park to the city, when, after a good supper at Webb's, in which the little banker confides to his companion that

Addie Thomas is the most unsavory, silliest young woman in town, her only remnant of good taste being her worship of himself. "For though," he adds, jauntily, "she's not my Annie, I'm her beau."

11.30 p.m. find the pair letting themselves in by latch-key at Broadacres.

Carew, putting on the chain bolt and divesting himself of his coat, with the comfortable feeling that home and *deshabille* are reached; on excellent terms with each other, they give a look in at the handsomely furnished, but unhomelike, drawing-room, to ascertain if a parcel from Tiffany, New York, has arrived—an order from Rice.

"Yes, here it is," he says, taking off the wrappers, disclosing a gold bracelet of exquisite workmanship, H.M.C., Nell's initials set in diamonds.

"Tip top! as everything from that house is. Tiffany leads on this continent," exclaims Carew, with a stifled sigh that Nell's heart is not more in this matter, but with the feeling that he is guarding her from future discomfiture.

"There is enough brie-a-brac strewn around here to set up half a dozen brides," says Rice, laughing, "but these diamonds had best come upstairs with me; they are too inviting to the eye feminine. I tell you what it is, Carew, I never saw a better female setting for diamonds than my little queen."

Over a glass of ale and a bit of cold chicken in the dining room, Carew agrees with him, saying:

"Nor did I, unless it was her mother."

"I am not at one with you, Carew. Nell tells me her mother was dark; only blondes should wear diamonds."

Carew starts, and is about to speak, but checks himself by finishing his glass at a draught. In half an hour they are more confidential, Carew taking the door from his lips, says, as they reach the top of the stairs ere retiring for the night:

"I have often told you that we Carews are mowed down by death's scythe with scant warning. I have had one stroke of paralysis, and Johnson says may have another with any green strain or combined mental and physical excitement. If you should, then, come across a skeleton in the family, promise me, Rice, that you will not reflect it on Nell," and, flinging off collar and tie, though his back is towards Rice,

he sees Carew's reflected face in the mirror, terribly flushed in its setting of reddish whiskers and moustache. No answer coming, Carew wheels around suddenly, and faces him, when the look of surprise on the small, dark face chills and sobers him mentally. "But I am dreaming, or making mountains out of mole-hills, as we Irish do, and you, Rice, born, as you don't deny, from the people, would laugh at any such mole-hill skeleton."

"You speak in riddles, Carew. I think I'll bid good-night to you and your rather ghostly talk of skeletons," he says, suspiciously.

"Skeletons be hanged!" and he tosses off a sleeping draught of bromide. "See here, Rice, I want to show you a new purchase—a burglar-proof safe. See!"

"Phew! it's a regular dandy, Carew; no skeleton about that, or in it, I hope," and again he turns a suspicious eye on its owner, who, regarding him uneasily, says, evasively:

"I thought you would like it."

"Like it! I should say so," he replies, abstractedly. "Who is the builder?"

"Goldie & McCullough, of Galt, I told their agent here I wanted something small for family papers."

"Family skeletons," thinks Rice, angry at the idea of a secret.

"You see, Rice, I don't know how soon an electric despatch may come for me from the other side of Jordan," he says, yawning and staggering under the combined influence of the glass of ale and sleeping draught, still, conscious of a feeling of uneasiness at the way in which Rice eyes him, after the way, too, in which he himself has singled him out as the man who will not care a rap on meeting the Carew skeleton. "I feel easier," he continues, yawning, "knowing my private papers are here rather than at my office, though if there's a man on earth I trust, it's my head clerk, Pickford. But my will is safe as a first mortgage inside of that safe, with its walls of welded iron and steel," and he staggers to a sitting position on the bed. "See, Rice, it has solid iron frames and corners, put together with steel-headed conical bolts. You should have one like it, Rice."

"I shall; Nell couldn't object to it in our room. It's an

ornament in itself, with its bolt works and hinge tips nickel-plated. Combination lock, you say?"

"Yes, which no one can open but myself. But in case of a sudden call to swell the 'silent majority,' I carry the directions about with me, with the key," he says, thickly, and putting on his night-shirt wrong side up.

"So you carry them about with you," thinks Rice, getting him into his *robe de nuit*, and leading him to the side of the bed, on which the master of Broadacres falls like a helpless log.

CHAPTER XVI.

"HONOR WITHERS, LOCKS OPEN, BARRIERS FALL."

In that pause that precedes action Mephistophiles fills the vacuum, that outweighs action's substance.

AREW, safe in the arms of Morpheus! One moment of thought, and Lucifer wields the sceptre, and the first act of the small banker is to stoop down and unfasten his patent leather Oxford ties, taking them off so that the servants in the upper flat, and Betsy in the back wing, may hear no sound. Turning the gas low, he repairs to his own apartment back of Crew's, leaves his shoes, not forgetting to admire his pale-blue silk hose, matching his underwear—Wheaton's fanciest. Divesting himself of collar, tie, vest and linen shirt, handling his diamond studs coolly, yet lovingly, without another hesitating moment he glides through the corridor and enters the aesthetic bedroom of his pretty bride elect, with a gratified smile, noting everything in perfect order and taste. This is not his first visit, for he and the trusted Pickford, on one occasion in charge of Broadacres, had regaled themselves in like manner; but at present he has other work in view, so does not poke his nose and fingers into her photo-cube or letters. No, he merely removes the lace pillow-sham, with its blue silk lining, from top of a pillow on the chinty bed, and

presses his small, dark face to its odorous whiteness, where the lovely face of his bride elect has lain.

And now to ferret out this skeleton, he muses, that has been wrongfully concealed from me; it's something connected with Nell, and I will and shall find it out, it's my *right*; it's Carew's fault that I have to bother myself at this time of night with that hanged combination lock, he should have told me what this deuced skeleton is long ago. Thus moralizing, he betakes himself to Carew's room, strongly imbued with the idea that 'tis he who is the injured party, and actually feels that by getting at the truth in this way he is conferring a favor on the now helpless man. Mephistophiles imbuing him with the idea that if he does not come at the truth in this way he will be obliged to demand an explanation from Carew, which will call forth the ire of the latter, giving offence to his pride by his attempting to force a confidence; that a rupture will be the consequence, their friendship be over and the marriage off.

And so, without more ado, he, from the door-mat, surveys the interior of Carew's apartment, when the first object his small, bead-like black eyes rest upon is the pocket-book of the sleeping man lying on the floor at the foot of the bed, together with his chamois leather tobacco pouch, which had fallen unnoticed by their owner in his sleepy condition. In the pocket-book he finds the following directions for opening the safe, which he coolly, though rapidly, reads, standing under the gas to the right of the heavily sleeping man. After once running through the directions, and with them in his hand, he stoops on one knee to the safe standing in the corner under the gas light, and one by one carefully goes by each of the following items in stealing the life secret from his now helpless friend:

1st. Observe the star mark at the top of the dial-ring, and the straight mark about an inch to the right. The star mark is the stopping point in unlocking, and the straight mark at the right is used only in making and changing a combination.

2nd. Take the straight mark for your stopping point, and then turn left until you bring 50 four times to the mark. Insert the key in the back of the lock until the *wing* of the same is passed through the *carver*. Then turn it one quarter round to the left, leave it there and proceed to make a combination as follows—here the sleeping man gives such a loud snort that

the sharpened senses of Rice take alarm lest he return from dreamland. Quick as a flash the gas is lowered to a glimmer, and he himself in the hall, when the loud breathing again proclaims that the fetters of sleep have not given away--and again he is on bended knee, and could our detectives Archibald, Cuddy, or that ilk, have caught a bird's-eye view of him, they would have photographed him as the coolest, cleanest, nattiest, nimblest swell who had ever "burgled" or come within the focus of their camera; and the diamond on the little finger of his right hand flashes and sparkles as he follows the last direction of:--Turn left, stopping when your third number comes the second time to the mark. Stop right there. Turn the key back to the right and withdraw it, and the door opens. So firmly is he fixed in his determination to continue to the triumphant end that, in pressing his lips together, his teeth audibly grate, and he casts a careless glance at the sleeping man, so pathetically unconscious of the evil working around him; while the small banker, unknowing that the laws of compensation are being worked out in his case in the person of a terror-stricken woman, in one long, white garment, bare feet, close-cropped red hair, and a disfiguring birth mark on her left cheek, who, in a tremor of fright, looks now over her shoulder, expecting to see he of the horns and hoofs now peering through the crevice, where the door hangs on its hinges. But the cool-headed banker smells no brimstone as he carefully handles numerous papers neatly labelled in their respective compartments.

Deeds of trust bring no unpleasant sensation to his fingers.

At last the will and a letter with it, addressed to Helen M. Carew, both marked private, and the letter sealed with the crest of the family. On examination, he concluded that it would be impossible to open the letter without detection, though doubtless the skeleton is here; the will may enlighten him, and unfolding it he mastered its contents thus:

"I, Phillip Twete Carew, will and bequeath to my daughter, Helen Mohonesotreie Carew," (the paper, cool as he is, almost drops from his grasp as he inaudibly mutters 'illegitimate,' but he reads eagerly), "all my real and personal property, she to be sole executrix.

"Phillip Twete Carew.

"Witnesses: Wm. Pickford, Neil Cameron."

"Codicil—It is my wish that my daughter, now Mrs. Hamlet Rice, formerly Helen M. Carew, my sole heiress, cause advertisements to be inserted in the *Edinburgh Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald*, with the endeavor to find and provide for one Elspeth Ross, who, if alive, is her mother's sister; description eighteen years ago: tall, lean, red, and Scotch, with a birth mark on left cheek of two bunches of red currants.

"Further—I desire to be cremated at Buffalo, this I *will* to be done in the interests of an over-crowding humanity."

A cool perspiration had permeated the whole frame of the small banker on meeting the skeleton, it had literally knocked him cold!

In haste to get to the privacy of his own apartments, to grow accustomed to the skeleton, he is not so deliberate as in the unlocking of the safe, and so makes a wrong combination, forcing him to give his attention to the work. At last! and a breath of relief accompanies the withdrawing of the key, and in replacing the directions and key in the pocket-book, he relieves his surcharged feelings by exclaiming audibly:

"His daughter! and of course illegitimate! what a come down when I slip the stilts of conceit from under her pretty little nose."

"I daur ye to do it, young mon!" says the woman who has noiselessly entered, taken the revolver from beneath the pillow of the sleeping man, pointing at the head of successful "burgling" night-patrol Rice. At the same moment the parrot, which has been disturbed by the lights and movements, flies at the shingled black head of the sneak thief.

Wheeling around at the familiar Scotch accent, a cold perspiration creeping over him as he clutches Poll by her claws to prevent her flying on to the bed: when the terror of the woman, apparent in the total absence of self-consciousness as to her singular appearance, nerves him, and with a hand of iron he possesses himself of the revolver, returning it to its place and speaking low yet distinct into her ear—

"Not a word, woman, but soft as a cat to the dining room lest he wake."

When there, he shuts the door, turns on a glimmer of gas, lifts one window, for the heat is stifling, fastens Poll securely in her cage and turns and faces her.

"Let go my arm, woman, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"That ye will na daur speak those fause words to Miss Nell I heard fa' fra' your lips in the master's room."

And her teeth chatter as though it is a night in December, her eyes glare as she clenches her fist in his cold, dark face.

"And why not?" he asks coolly, feeling his way as to how much she knows—how long a time she has been a spy upon his actions.

"Because you are in my power, sir, you broke into yon safe, an' read the master's will, aye ye daurna woorit Miss Nell wi' you' fause words, she is na' a base born brat," she shrieked excitedly.

"Keep quiet, woman, or I'll swear I'll choke you. Come another loud word and the cover of this buffet is stuffed down your ugly throat; as well as playing the spy on my actions, you can act a lie. What would the Carews say were I to tell them they are harboring Elspeth Ross? Yes," he laughs jeeringly, "you have forgotten your raven wig, and what a pretty taste for fruit your mother ——" but his sneering remark is never finished, for at this she suddenly becomes the prey of self-consciousness, awake to the knowledge that she is undisguised and unclothed—flinging her arms up to her close-cropped head, covering her left cheek with both hands alternately, writhing and groaning in an agony of spirit, and finally crouching under the extension table, foam oozing from her mouth, great drops of moisture standing out on her forehead.

This irritates Rice, so that stooping down with the remembrance that in her normal state she is one of the old-time servants to whom to hear is to obey, says authoritatively:

"Come, come woman, no more of this row, stop that noise I tell you, your master will awake and put you out doors; get up *instantly*; we have to settle this business and cry quits or open warfare."

His words have the desired effect, and enveloping herself in the heavy table cover, whole head and face also, her eyes alone visible, trembling from head to foot with streaming tears, she says:

"Noo sir, about the young ledly, the lassie Miss Nell, ye will na' bring her down to the dust by saying fause words o'

her birth; the master trusted ye, thinkin' ye wad mak' na' trouble, seeing as ye your sel' are lowly born."

"Rats! I am clean born anyway, and a gilt-edged banker too, and you! what an aristocratic aunt to my little high-filuting beauty, phew! he might well hide his skeleton and illegitimate—I'll bet my coat—Poole's at that, and the other brother hid the scandal under his wife's skirts!"

"How daur ye shape sich words, she is as clean born as your sel'; your sire was only a wee bit cobbler," cries Betsy—as we have known her, so shall we know her—foaming at his effrontery in making game of stolen knowledge. "How daur ye mak' spit balls to fire at your betters, out o' secrets, too, ye played the thief in the nicht to get hold on," she says in black wrath, her eyes fixed upon him in utter scorn as he sits on the table holding one knee and swinging the other foot.

"Not so fast, old lady, or I'll have you up for defamation!"

"Ye daur not."

"Come, come, old lady, you are too fresh. I went to Carew's bedroom because I heard him breathing as if he was suffocating; so you found me in your very singular make-up, which, on my questioning you about, you explained by telling me the history of Nell Carew's birth. How does that sound, old lady?" he asks cunningly.

"It will never sound in the master's ears," she cries bravely, though trembling lest he brave out the lie, but 'tis only for a moment, for with the Scotch the tie of blood is strong, and Nell is her life, her all, for whom she will fight to the death.

At this juncture the clock strikes two and the handle of the hall door is turned—simultaneously, the strange couple look at each other in alarm: in a few moments the slats of the shutter of the window which had been lifted up by Rice stir, a face appearing,—it is a policeman, who, recognizing Rice, says apologetically:

"Beg pardon sir, I saw lights moving about, and as Mr. Carew asked me to have my weather eye on Broadacres, I came around. Good-night, or rather good-morning, sir."

Betsy in alarm makes for the door, but, mindful of Nell's interest, says, as Rice softly closes the window:

"You will keep a quiet tongue in your head, sir, an' no clack o' this night's wark."

"I'll see," he says, angrily. "I have a shrewd suspicion it has been an 'Effie Deanes' job over again; was she clean got, I have a right to know?"

"I telt ye before, you shameless mon, I hae the marriage lines wi' her mither's picture i' my breast," and with trembling fingers she draws from her bosom the miniature case we have before seen her handle. Opening the case, she draws forth a piece of paper and hands it him. Scanning it attentively, he sees it is a marriage certificate; a clergyman at the Forest City, since dead, had married Carew to Jessie Ross, the late Maston Carew and Elspeth Ross (Betsy) being witnesses. Handing it back to her he says crossly:

"The whole business has a fishy look."

"It's no sae fishy as the way you took in learnin' o' it," flares up Betsy. "Hasna' a mon a richt to gie his ain bairn to his ain brither an' he pleases; ye hae seen the marriage lines, so cease clackin' more o' the matter, and I'll keep a quiet tongue in my head over your night's wark."

"Oh, that's your way of squaring accounts, is it, old lady? books balanced, eh? and now to our beds as quietly as mice," he says, somewhat relieved.

Betsy, on her knees, buries her face in the bed-clothes, and implores forgiveness of the Almighty for truth withheld as to Nell's hirth.

And again she sees her frail, pretty sister, after the pangs of child-birth, going by dying gasps through the marriage service; and hears again baby Nell's cries coming as Amen to the ceremony, and as farewell to the departing spirit of her mother.

Of how the good clergyman had remained with the corpse, while she, wrapping up the new-born infant, drove to Queen-street, London, Ont., to the palatial mansion of the banker, Maston Carew, Esq., and of how the infant had been smuggled in and placed at the breast of Mrs. Carew—mother of Hazel—who had just been delivered of a still-born child.

And Betsy on her knees remembers of how proud, high-born Phillip Twete Carew would never have wed her pretty sister Jessie, who had been child's maid to the little Hazel, but that the medical man had sworn she could not live.

And the tender conscience of Betsy, all too sensitive, considering the man Rice, causes her to writhe in spirit as she

cowers before God in fear, for has she not in part lied to Rice.

And she remembers of how the real father of the babe had paid her passage to Scotland, bidding her never show her face near him again, reminding him of his mad folly, but her kin in the old land were cold and stern, ever throwing in her face the slip made by her mother, and as they guessed by Jessie; and so hungering for a sight of the pretty baby of her frail but loved Jessie, she had crept back to Canada, London, Ont., and the Carews, so disguised they never suspected; and she groans in the spirit, pressing her finger nails into the flesh of her folded arms, as she thinks of the mean man Rice being in possession of—in part—the secret of her idol's birth—the secret she would have given her heart's blood to conceal.

She is aware that the indomitable pride of the master of Broadacres would have prevented his confessing himself as the father of Nell, save for some promise he has made the mother of Hazel; she feels sure also, that did Carew know her as Elspeth Ross, he would spurn her with his heel, as a reminder of the low blood in his child—his child who has inherited the Carew pride. She groans in agony lest Rice, after the manner of his kind, shall, when wed to her darling, cast all he knows in her teeth. She is thankful that her uneasy wakefulness, all through thoughts of Nell's misery at being torn from her true lover Gray, has caused her to hear Rice moving about, when, with every wheel of being at high pressure, in a dazed, excited state, forgetful of disguise, she had surprised the sneaking house guest at his work.

Oh! sighs the faithful heart, for strength from heaven to do battle with this man, in compelling him to stay his tongue, and not break the proud spirit of her darling by telling her what he knows, though he knows not the worst, thank God!

And Betsy, on her knees, feels sure, that dare she confide in the master of Broadacres of the traitorous act of Rice, he would destroy all proof of Nell's birth, as, having written his own—first taking advice of his lawyers—no one is cognizant of the matter. For as it is, from the way Rice has received his hint as to a skeleton, dazed though he was on retiring, he has felt, in a sleepy sort of way, whether a man of birth could have acted so mean: and yet he has ever felt a man born of the people will be best, and in the always possible

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event of Elspeth Ross appearing at any moment, and blurting out the truth to perhaps the press, has driven him to what he has deemed the more advisable plan of giving his pretty daughter in wedlock—as to Rice, who would, in his (Carew's) opinion, only have laughed at it, so easing the burden for proud Nell.

Betsy wrestles in prayer and with her troubled thought until the dawn of a cloudy Sunday, with the words of a favorite sacred song on her lips :

"Aye," she sighs, "could we but kneel and cast our load
Even while we pray, upon our God,
Then rise wi' lightened cheer."

And as she dons black patch and wig, she feels that all is changed, and that her life is harder, but that she must never quail before Rice ; she must make him feel that *she*, not he, has the whip-hand.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PRELUDE TO—MATRIMONY.

"Noo wha' will cheer puir Nell Carew,
The world seems dark an' eerie O?"

T Broadacres, on the Sunday previous to the wedding of Nell and Rice, there are troubled spirits in the breasts of Carew and Betsy, while at Moyvane, the cottage at Hamilton Beach, there is outward calm with inward conflict, a silent despair having taken complete possession of Nell.

Monday, the eve of her wedding, finds her, after the silent treatment by the Christian scientist, seated on the verandah, with hopeless eyes fixed upon the grey waters of the lake into which the rain is commencing to fall steadily. Maud White is beside her, holding the poor little listless hands as they wait

until it is time to catch the Dummy into Hamilton, for Nell is to take the *Macassa* to Toronto; there is a look of such utter desolateness in the lovely little face as to bring sympathetic tears to the eyes of Maud.

Mrs. Long now appears, the four tots at her heels, with parting pleadings for "sweets" from the city, for she is going in, in obedience to a telegram from Crew, to see Nell safe aboard the steamer.

The girl friends embrace silently, save for the intense look of sympathy in the eyes; but Nell is back for a brief second, in which she says, despairingly:

"Maud, dear, *don't* miss this afternoon's boat, or God only knows how I shall live through the night."

"I shall be with you. Dear mother," she whispers, "*don't* forget."

Arriving in the city, and making their way by the street cars to the handsome pier, in thoughtful mood Mrs. Long waits to see the steamer "put out," then with hastening steps just catches a James-street car stopping at the Telegraph Office, in obedience to Maud's earnest request, taking from her satchel a "message," hands it, without perusal, to the clerk, who counts the following words:—

"To Roderick R. P. S. Gray, Esq.,

"Veteran Lodge, Ottawa.

"At Christ Church, Deer Park, North Toronto *to-morrow*, Tuesday, at 11 a.m. *Danger*. Am half distracted.

"MAUD WHITE.

"At the Beach.

Hamilton."

Paid for—for this is the age of barter—Mrs. Long turns her steps to Murray's, for the smalls are all in need of embellishment, and Maud must have a new pair of Paris gloves to match her cream hunting for the wedding; then, with wondrous speed, considering her rotundity and the slime under foot, she fills her pockets with sweets for the tots, and then makes her way to the stately Post Office, from whence she emerges with her beloved *Science Journal* tucked under her arm, thence to the Beach, on her way thither giving Nell an absent treatment.

On the *Macassa*, Nell, avoiding the passengers as well as

the rain storm, retreats to a corner of the salon, trying in vain to lose herself in her novel; but when a fairy moment of forgetfulness does come to her, it is lost in contrasting the happy heroine in Black's charming story, "A Life in a House Boat," with herself.

At the Yonge-street wharf, Toronto, she is met by the faithful Betsy, with dry waterproof, umbrella and rubbers, in which she tenderly encases Nell ere allowing her to step outside the comfortable salon.

Betsy, though loth to name them, unwillingly obeys orders.

"The master would hae come down his sel', Miss Nell, but that he is busy with a client, selling him one o' they tip-top lots in East Toronto, he said, an' Mr. Rice, he could na leave the bank, but telt me to say he wad come down an' meet Miss White this afternoon, an' come up to Broadacres for dinner the night."

Nell, with a disdainful shrug of shoulders, makes a *monie*, too depressed to talk.

"But will na' the young ledly be for bringin' a wee bit box? Mr. Rice will be handy to carry it for her."

"Yes, I suppose, but don't speak of him, Betsy; oh! all the carriages are taken, bother! we shall have to foot it to the cars; how excessively slippery York mud is—I was nearly down. This is a wretched bit of pavement at the east side of this stumbling block to civilization, the—Custom House, it's as uneven, as if it were a huge human grater."

"So it is, Miss Nell; tak' my arm, lassie, I canna hold the umbrella over your bonnie cap, sae weel else. Yes, Miss Nell, I'm thinking Miss White will be for thanking Providence for a lad to carry her bit bag to-day, aye, an' gie her his arm, too. We winmin should aye mak' use o' the men folk, it's why they were created, I'm thinking," she says sagely, as she covers an unprotected corner of Nell's satchel which she had put inside the folds of her Ross plaid she wears tartan fashion.

"You are right, Betsy, unless when one meets a man worth loving, and *you know*," she says proudly, "there are some, but Rice is no more fit to mate with a—Curew, than a barn-yard fowl with the eagle!"

Betsy trembles. "Lassie, lassie, I fear me sair if ye gie

yon mon, the lad Rice, sich proud looks, he will be for forgetting to be kind til ye, dearie."

"Oh, no, don't you fret, he knows I am a lady as my dear mother was before me. You know I have always kept him on a lower rung than myself. Why, woman, you are trembling, your very bonnet strings are off on a quivering excursion. Here is our car, signal to the conductor, quick, for mind-reading don't come into their long day's work."

In the Yonge-street open car, and into pools of water pouring from the soaking curtains. Our ever courteous city men give up their seats to our pretty Nell Carew, as also to the odd-looking woman wearing a veil with large dots over her black patch. With passengers to the front of them, passengers to the back of them, nothing that can be called conversation passes between them; a damper being also on their spirits as on their clothing. After the car passes Bloor street, passengers thin out, so that on reaching the Metropolitan Electric, one damp nobody being the only other occupant. Nell, coming from unhappy thought of the morrow, says sorrowfully:

"Betsy, has uncle kept his promise as to prevailing on Rice," with a *mon* of dislike, "to consent to your living with me?"

"Weel, Miss Nell, all I ken is, that I couldna' wait til the master had time to name it til you, so I just out wi' it this morn a standing at the buffet pouring out their cocoa. The master, he said no word, an' Mr. Rice, just turning to the master for he didna' seem to like to look me in the eye—said, "oh, I suppose so, leustways for a wee while for Mistress Rice—"

"How dare he call me—names," breaks in Nell, her violet eyes flashing.

"Yes, Miss Nell, how daur he, afore you are one by the prayer book, just what I thought my ainself; but on he clacked, saying that you an' his sel' wad be junketing about, an' I wad come in handy to look after the servants, an' he said he guessed E. E. Shepperd wad hae to prent his society column in sma' piea to mak' room for the doings o' Mr. and Mrs. Hamlet Rice."

"It's my belief," says Nell, scornfully, "*mortification* would set in if he failed to appear in each issue of *Saturday Night*."

"Weel, weel, lassie, tastes differ. Noo, I wad na jest care my ain sel' to be set up in prent each week, cheek by jowl wi' folk I carena for, an' every lad an' lass to ken my ways an' gownds better nor I do my ain sel'; but I'm thinking, Miss Nell your wee mon will say na mair against my living wi' ye. I'll just be at your braw house when ye come back, an' it 'il be mair home like for you, dearie. Indeed, he may clack like ony hen, he'll no turn me fra' your doors ance my foot is inside—eights at that—what have I to live for else, dearie," and there is such pathos in her tones, such a softening of the rugged lines of her face as she thinks of Rice in possession of Carew's secret, and of how alone poor Nell is, save for her own lowly self, and of the mean ways and words of some men when in possession, that tears gather in her eyes, as carefully, nay tenderly, she guides Nell's footsteps through York mud in stepping from the car in front of Broadacres.

"Just step intil my big foot-prints, Miss Nell, and ye'll be freer o' mud."

After an unrestful, troubled night of almost constant wakefulness, in which poor Nell talks in whispers to her bed-fellow, Maud White, or tosses wearily about amongst the pillows, the summer day dawns which is to see her become the bride of Hamlet Rice. The rain clouds of yesterday still frown heavily, seeming to the girl friends, as they lean from the open hall window on their descent to the breakfast room, to form a black canopy over Broadacres, and the little church near by.

The matutinal meal is eaten in almost unbroken silence. Nell, white and nervous, plays with her egg and milk toast, when catching her uncle's eye watching her, a hard look coming to mouth and eyes, impatiently dashing aside Maud's hand in which her own has been clasped under the table, she says, coldly:

"Uncle Phillip, Hazel in her letter, dated last Saturday, says to ask you to please telegraph her *where* I am; that she is half distracted at not having known my address, at Buffalo, she means. Little she knows what is about to occur at Christ Church this morning; she would be more distracted than ever, poor darling."

"Helen Carew!" cries her uncle, harshly, an intense look

of worry on his handsome face, "I can't, and *won't* stand any of those side hits at myself, they are ill-bred to say the least of it: I shall telegraph her when you and Rice are off."

Nell cannot thank him for the promise to telegraph *such news*; and as she thinks of the great love of Roderick Gray, and of the anguish this morning's act will hold for her and him, she feels as if her heart will break, and with a hasty excuse she leaves the table, and flies, as she has from a child, to the faithful Betsy.

As they rise from the table Carew is thoughtful, and as Maud looks at him, his morning papers neglected, she makes inward comment on his altered appearance, which is the result of some other hints on the skeleton he had thrown out to Rice the day previous, and of the cold, repellent manner in which Rice had received such hints, the result being that even now Carew is pondering the advisability of destroying every written word relative to the birth of Nell, and that before he leaves the house.

Feeding Poll with hard-boiled egg, Maud is, as it were, blind and deaf to the absorbed silence of her host, usually so pleasantly loquacious; nor does she glance his way, as a heavy sigh, almost a groan, awakes him to the remembrance that unless alone he should never forget his mask.

"Mr. Carew, how long do you suppose it will be before Nell and Mr. Rice reach Ottawa?" asks Maud, wondering for the hundredth time, half in afright, what the result of her telegraphic message to Veteran Lodge will be.

"Just one month Miss White. You see they first make the run to Gotham, Rice has a married sister there in a well-feathered nest, I can tell you, and in seeing the wondrous sights of our American Paris, Nell will forget that she ever met this fellow Gray at those blasted saw-banks—excuse me—from New York they go to the Modern Athens, cultured Boston. Remind Nell to take her Webster, I dare not, she looks so blue already from Boston up to Quebec and Montreal, thence to Ottawa. I wish," he added, "sincerely, 'you would try and cheer Nell, she will realize her good fortune by and by. I know Nell's nature," he says, a trifle bitterly, "a love of luxury is an innate taste, and had I consented to her impulsive liking for this fellow at Ottawa, she would have hated

him for his empty purse, while yet in the honeymoon: but just now she is feeling badly cut up, all the outcome of the trip east; before then she had none of those maudlin love-sick airs, and would have come to care for Rice in time. But I am wasting time, and a bore to you, talking of this bit of sheer folly: you will greatly please me if you will take the *Chicora* with them across to Niagara," handing her a five dollar bill, "Nell will be glad, and you will return in time for the *Modjesku* back to Hamilton, and I shall telephone to the gas office," he says, with a shadowy smile, "to meet you. Will you do this?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Carew, I am sure Nell will be pleased."

"*Merci*, and now for my car for the city." Touching the bell, the housemaid appearing, he says, getting inside his plaid caped-waterproof, "Has Webb sent everything, Sarah?"

"Yes, sir, I heard Betsy tell cook so."

An hour later, in which Nell has been locked in the privacy of her own apartment, during which Betsy and Maud hear her at times pace the room rapidly, again giving way to grief in murmured words, again quiet as the grave of her dead hopes, as she gazes on the photo— a speaking likeness of her lost lover, Roderick Gray. At the close of an hour or so she emerges from her room, a piteous look of suffering showing in the violet eyes, as, hearing the voices of Betsy and Maud in the dining-room, she goes down.

With one sorrowful glance at her heart's darling, Betsy vanishes ere Nell sees the grief she cannot hide.

"See, Nell dear, how pretty the luncheon-table looks," says Maud, in no way alluding to Nell's grief-stricken appearance.

They stand a few moments, Nell's eyes ever and anon brimming. She says no word, but swallows the big lump that will come in her throat as she thinks anew of how Rod and she in the blissful paradise of a few weeks ago had talked of the joy that would be theirs on the day they would link hearts and lives in one, and now, though her violet eyes rest mechanically on the polished table, she does not note the pretty effect of her own handy-work in the fringed square of linen embroidered in effective silk floss as centre-piece, on which stands a jardiniere of delicate ferns and lovely flowers. Smaller pieces of linen embroidered in same design are under each plate, a bouquet of

sweet carnations with the napkin at the right hand ; in exquisite dishes are olives and bon-bons, to remain on the table through the courses.

A miniature azalia, a mass of pink bloom, stands in the large, shaded western window, in its green tub, on the edge of which Poll is now perched, a piece of bark in one claw, at which she pecks, or talks to the group of palms standing near.

At 11.45, Betsy, who has been directing cook and housemaid, and taking a grim satisfaction in inspecting the dishes, salads, confectionery, ices, and wedding-cake, which Nell had insisted should be on the buffet, as she feels too unnerved for any pleasantry as to the cutting of it,—careful Betsy counts again the places set for six, as the bachelor rector, with the trusted Pickford, small groom Rice, Carew, Maud, and poor wee Nell will be six : yes, everything is in good taste. Webb sends the scalloped oysters as well as the other dishes, and Betsy in her new black silk gown and finest white apron seats herself in the hail to watch for Nell's appearing, endeavoring to steady her nerves by concentrating thought on a black silk stocking she is knitting for Nell.

At last, a few minutes to twelve, the girls come down stairs, Maud looking well in her becoming frock of cream bunting, accentuating the dark blue of her eyes and brown hair, her round cheeks flushed with nervous excitement, feeling that but for her strong friendship for Nell, she would give worlds to fly away from this, the most trying scene of her young life, longing alternately for her strong-minded mother, or Alec Burns, frightened at the mechanical way Nell is acting, much as though she were walking in her sleep.

Though a rare bit of loveliness she is, in a travelling gown of navy blue silk, trimmed with gimp, and but just sufficient silk embroidery to make the gown handsome, and from the hands of New York Redfern ; a tiny Parisian bonnet is perched on her lovely blonde hair, the violets of which it is formed looking as though just plucked with the dew upon them, such a pure water glisten have the small Irish diamonds nestling among them ; in her prettily gloved hands she carried a huge bouquet of violets ; her rose mouth is closed determinedly, staying the tell-tale moisture gathered in the violet eyes.

Betsy's bosom swells with pride as she notes Nell's proud

bearing, her slim figure erect, her head held high ; not that she feels proud just now, poor girl, but Rice has told her that her opposite neighbors, the porkers, call her the bank defaulter's daughter, and she will not walk humbly, as though this marriage is a lift to her.

"Betsy," she says, in repressed tones, taking a packet from her pocket, "I am going to leave in your care this colored photo of my dear dead mother."

And as the faithful creature takes it, the sharp edges of the miniature case containing the picture of the lovely girl's *real* mother seem to cut into her bosom, proud Nell little dreaming what the bodice of the black silk gown conceals.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NELL AND RICE AT THE MATRIMONIAL ALTAR.

"Now droop the roses lorn and pale,
That once were gay and bright ;
Now mournful sings the nightingale
Upon the tranced night."

THE interior of Christ Church was truly a sanctuary from the rain which tumbled from the black and angry sky in torrents.

The vestibule was filled and crowded with dripping water-proofs and the tears of discomfort, shed by the umbrella family, had not left a dry spot for the sole of the bridal foot.

Maud White, with a powerful effort for self control, nerved, too, by the knowledge of an absent treatment by her Christian Scientist mother ; which treatment is entirely void of power in the firmly orthodox mind of Nell, who, just now, Maud feels additionally called on to support, as she feels the trembling of her whole frame in unfastening the bridal water-proof.

"Oh, Maud ! Maud !" she whispers, brokenly. "Maud ! Maud ! I feel as though I shall *die* ! Whatever possessed me to fear banishment to France ! I wish God would help me to run away even *now*."

"Come girls, are you ready?" whispers Carew. "The church looks quite pretty and does Rice credit; those roses and green palms and flowering shrubs are holding the ladies' eyes until we make our *entree*. Jove! I gave myself away; the Snobtons caught my eye," and Nell remembers that one of them is on the war-path for Rod., but the master of Broadacres continues his observations through the partially opened vestibule door.

"Rice and Pickford are standing waiting, the rector is robed, prayer-book in hand, and, listen! Someone has given a signal to the organist. There sound the first notes of the Wedding March. Come!" he says, impatiently, nay irritably.

A hushed murmur of admiration falls upon the gratified ears of the bridegroom, as the violet robes and blonde hair of our pretty Nell appear, with head proudly erect, and a somewhat disdainful air, the heavy fringed lids of her violet eyes drooped, lest she meet the gaze of the man she is to wed; nor does she raise them until an unthinking bang of the door falling on the stillness causes a strange tremor to run through her. She hears, and seems to feel, some one's breathless haste in entering, as the strong tones of Addie Thomas say, "What a picnic: see there!" as an Irish setter, unrecognizable in his soaking coat, has passed through the shrinking crowd, where no human being could squeeze through, and, with a glad bark, springs with his muddy paws on to Nell's pretty bridal gown, when, with a kick from the side of Carew, he is sent whining into the crowd.

While the rector reads the impressive words of the service of matrimony, Pickford, with an eye to the dollar, casts sheep's eyes at the pork heiress, Addie Thomas, who is more like a tallow candle, trimmed with a brass candlestick, than ever, and who has only glances for the small bridegroom, while Pickford might be a frozen image, for all thought Maud gives him, as she watches the tremor of agitation running through the girlish frame of the bride, and she thinks of how like the soaking dog is to Kerry, the setter owned by the Learys, that she had seen at the Sandbanks: wonders what the stir is behind her, and if Rod. Gray received her telegram: and the solemn words fell on her ear of, "which holy estate Christ ordained and beautified by His presence."

The spectators seem unusually impressed, and crowd forward to see the bride's lovely face, as the rector reads the irrevocable words, "it was ordained for the mutual society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other both in prosperity and adversity. Into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can show any just cause

Here Nell, giving a startled look around her, as if for escape or help, at the same moment that the soaking dog accompanied a terrific peal of thunder with a long whine of fear, as Roderick Gray, terribly excited, has crushed and pushed himself within range of the terror-stricken violet eyes. As she meets his gaze, a vivid flash of lightning brings out the bright sheen of her hair, shedding a wondrous lustre over the lovely face, and before either her uncle or Rice can realize the situation, it seems to have flown from between them, and out, out into the pelting rain, the thundering storm! When Gray and Maud White, fearing they know not what, his heart, withal, beating with a wild hope, she in a tremor as to Nell's safety, and how it will all end, but with one mind they had dashed through the staring and frightened spectators out, too, into the storm-tossed streets, but only in time to see Nell take the most stylish of Doane's carriages, the white ribbons dragging at the horses' ears, the trap the small banker had ordered to convey him and his bride to Geddes' wharf. But, thank God for a power above man's, for Nell's chains are broken, and she is on the road to freedom—and a Hamilton boat, to freedom! Yes, even though to banishment till of age.

Roderick Gray shouts hoarsely, but the driver's sympathies are with his lovely fare, and not knowing the wild hello! stop! to be the voice of a friend, dashes on and away in time to catch the morning boat to Hamilton which had been delayed by the storm, and off she steams just as Maud and Gray step from another of the bridal hacks. Four dollars rapidly change hands. "Follow me quickly," he says breathlessly to Maud.

"For Heaven's sake put back!" he shouts, but she is only a dozen yards out, and Gray is born to command.

"I bet my hat he's after that lovely girl who fainted just now in the saloon," says the captain, putting back.

The gallant captain of the *Macassa* gives up his state-room to the handsome young fellow whom no one likes to refuse, and who, with his lovely burden in his arms, as he carries her thither, is the cynosure of all eyes. The door closed, in a cosy pillowed chair, Gray kneeling at her feet, Maud beside her, the loving contact revives her, and she says, fervently :

"Thank God ! Oh thank, thank God ! He sent you to save me, my own dear Rod !"

"Yes, my own sweet," he says, in intense exaltation, "*my* Nell Carew, God be thanked your pretty maiden name is still your own. I tremble to think that but for Maud's telegram to myself, you would be even now that man's wife," and he shivers at the thought.

"Oh, Maud, how can I, *we*," she says with a loving smile, "thank you sufficiently. Banishment to France will seem freedom after the agony of the past days. Will you take me then, my own dear Rod, as Lady Mary Wortley Montague went to her bridegroom, with no dot, only the clothes she stood in ? Ah, I know you will."

"Thank God, pet, that you do know my heart so well, and 'tis your own sweet self I love. Your uncle cannot withhold your address from Hazel as he did all through the past heart-breaking month. We will correspond continuously, and I shall save every dollar to be able to make holiday trips to feed my famishing heart in your dear presence."

"Yes, dearest, that will bridge time, and you can guess out newspaper puzzles and get a free trip to Europe, besides," she says smiling.

"Yes, Nell, and I'll help him when he comes next month to Toronto to the Canada Life, we will be back from the Hamilton beach, and our house on Sherbourne-street will be open to him always."

Here a scratching at the door causes Gray to open it, when the Irish setter, Kerry, with barks of delight, bounds in, the captain putting in his head for a moment, saying :

"We had to haul in this passenger. Fine fellow, must have run a long distance, from his condition, but swam out boldly. A couple of the deck hands hauled him up with a rope, just saving him by the skin of his teeth."

"Hazel's dog! dear old fellow! It was he then, in church,"—and she shudders.

"Yes, sweet, he was with me most of the time at Ottawa, and yesterday, on receiving this dear girl's telegram—"

"Rod, you'll make me jealous," she says with a shadowy smile, her small hands on his head, as she thinks sorrowfully of their coming separation. Their thoughts in unison, with a heavy sigh, forgetting his unfinished sentence, he gazes long into the violet eyes and beautiful little face.

Maud pretends to read a book she has picked up, as she alternately pets the setter.

"And what are your present plans, darling?"

"Just to make this return trip, Rod., and go at once to Broadacres—I shall reach there at six—and shall tell uncle I am ready for banishment," she says, brokenly, though bravely.

"God bless you, my own, and make me worthy to be your husband."

The scene at Christ Church on the somewhat tragic departure of Nell is one my pen fails me in describing.

A panic ensued, many rushing to the door, when, not having the incentive to flight which had impelled the three who had vanished, the pelting rain drove them again to the refuge of the sanctuary, where a tragedy was being enacted.

Carew, having relieved himself by language emphatically profane, had fallen down in a fit of apoplexy or paralysis, on which the sexton and a cabman who waited with the hack which had conveyed the now helpless man to church, now returned him to Broadacres to the astonished and awe-stricken Betsy, the sexton hurriedly telling her of the flight of Nell, and of the following of Maud and a strange gentleman.

Betsy, doing what she deems best for Carew, orders the housemaid to telephone for Dr. Johnson, who, on arriving, pronounces it to be a fit of apoplexy, predicting paralysis of one side, bleeding him and applying an ice bag to his head, saying, he would be up again before night.

At Christ Church an unthought-of union is taking place. The fury of Rice equalled that of Carew, but culminated in a different manner. Addie Thomas, regardless of the stares of the spectators, pressing to his side, had been affectionately demonstrative, when, much to the disgust of Pickford, who hoped

to have consoled the heiress, Rice, with a few words to the rector as to changing the name in the license of our pretty Nell to unwholesome-faced Addie Thomas—a word in the ear of the pork heiress brings her to his side, her vulgar person and robes a marked contrast to proud Nell. She was, however, jubilant at the fruition of her dreams, and flattered herself that Rice is as much delighted at the flight of Nell as she is herself. Her nasal tones give no uncertain sound in the irrevocable words, “I will.”

And Grundy is given a tid-bit in the fact of her effusively kissing her husband while the final words are yet on the rector’s lips, filling the sacred edifice with amazement.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT NEPEAN POINT, OTTAWA.

“Why mourns the forest, sad and drear,
Drear as a winter sea;
Because, my love, thou art so dear,
And I must part from thee.”

NEPEAN POINT, at the closing of a spring-like day in the January following the stroke of paralysis to Carew, and Nell’s wild flight to freedom through the summer rain-storm. ’Tis, for snow-bound Ottawa, wondrously mild, and from Major’s Hill park, standing on Nepean Point, one revels in a glorious winter scene. The sun sinking in the west is still lingering in the blue of the heavens as though loath to leave the sceptre entirely in the hand of winter. Yea, the snow is melting to tears in a few sun-warm spots, for the second winter coming. The bright pointed roofs and round towers of the buildings reflect the sun’s rays, dazzling one’s eyes with their brightness. Diamonds glisten in the snow at the feet of a slim young woman who stands gazing out on the breast of nature, resting quietly until the quickening breath of spring.

Her large grey eyes rest now on the far-off Laurentian range, their dull white outlines clearly defined against the lower red lines of the sunset. Now she turns her purely oval profile over her shoulder a trifle nervously, then again her eyes turn anxiously and rest upon an ice-boat, sloop-rigged, from Toronto bay, a rash venture never before nor since seen on the ice of the Ottawa river. Skimming, flying, skating and dashing over from Hull, the boat holds her own consciousness with its wild, bird-like motion, so that she feels not that a gentleman has neared her from behind, who, having seen the ice-boat from Sussex-street bridge, has come through Major Hill's park to secure a coign of vantage at the Point, as well as to gratify his artistic taste in the varied winter scene stretching far and wide.

The gentleman was none other than Donald MacLean, who has spent the last six months at New York city, U.S. Since last we saw his honest, manly face, many lines of thought have come about the mouth, eyes and forehead, for he has had much inward conflict over the loss of Hazel, and in that loss feels poor, though possessing many dollars. So intent is he on watching the ice-boat and in scanning the changing hues of earth and sky, that he hears, almost abruptly, the other rapt gazer, hid as she is, till the last moment, by some deep green firs and a clump of shivering maples. He starts, seeing nothing but the lithe figure, her back towards him, intent as she is on the ice-boat now nearing the small, snow-covered pier for the summer ferry-boats from Hull. She sways to and fro in the frolicsome wind at this unprotected point. Now, it plays with her bon as she puts the warm bear of her muff to her ears and cheeks; now, in a merry prank, runs off with her pocket handkerchief from the opening of her muff. She turns in pursuit.

"Mr. MacLean!"

"Mrs. Leary!" and his fur cap is off and the handkerchief restored, he noticing, as their hands meet, that her pretty cheeks are thin and worn.

"What a many months you have been absent from your tower-crowned city," he says, with a smile of welcome.

"Yes," he replies somewhat gravely, "for six months. I left two days after your departure for the Sandbanks last

summer, and our pleasant evening at dear old Veteran Lodge. How much has happened since then. Your baby boy has gone home; your pretty sister has been brave enough to run away from the misery of a union with a man she cared naught for, and so has made Roderick Gray blissfully happy. I saw it in his face and tones as I passed through Toronto a day or two ago on my journey hither, though he, you are aware, only goes up to Broadacres when Mr. Carew is in the mood."

"Yes," she answers, brightening, "dear Nell is quietly, blissfully happy, and changed from a rather wicked, though always bewitching little elf, to a thoughtful little angel, and is devoting herself bravely to the care of poor uncle." But even as she speaks, he sees that her mind is on the movements of her husband. The ice-boat has, after leaping some dangerous spots, landed the occupants on the small pier just at the base of the Point; and now they enter the brewer's cottage for refreshments, and in a few minutes again emerge, when, with much gay laughter and chatter, the echo of which comes up to the watchers on the Point, they again take to the tiny, white winged craft.

With a half unconscious sigh, Hazel Leary turns to her companion, half contented that she is not alone, and yet with the feeling that just now she will not be a cheering companion.

One more anxious gaze ere the winged boat is out of sight, and McLean, following her gaze, recognizes her husband's companion as Miss Belleville, who, attached to his department in some way, using her pen when it pleases her, but it always pleasing her to flirt continuously with Hazel's husband, even as she is now, in the six-inch deep cock-pit of the bird-like craft. In the boat with them is the steersman, a young Frenchman, also in the same department, who is minister of this department, as he directs the movable hind-runner.

As they turn their steps from the Point, McLean in no way referring to the winged-skaters, talks quietly, endeavoring to change the current of her thought:

"Yes, it is a long time since I have stood here. Nepean Point and Veteran Lodge used to be favorite haunts of mine when a law student. You may have heard that on my dear old friend, the late Mr. Quirk, adopting me, we lived at the

'Russell,' but 'twas here I did most of my reading after hours and at dawn, for, never much caring for society's whirl, I scored a point by being able to give some hours to the early dawn that I had not stolen from the night. Rod. Gray and I have often smoked a pipe here, lying in laziest *dolce far niente* on the grass, and watched the sunrise lifting up, awakening into life all human-tide, which would set us thinking and talking of the vast masses down there in Lower Town, held by a different creed and different language than our own, and from thence, life's puzzles would hold us and we would wonder when the mists would roll away, as they were rolling up the Laurentian mountains, driven by the breath of the glorious eastern sunrise. I love the varied scenery about our city. We have highlands, lowlands, river, canal, and woodland."

"Yes, literally," she says, turning to him with a smile, indicating by a gesture the great tracts of lumber.

"True; I own to the deformity. But the eye of love passes over such blemishes, and as I am not a dreamer, in that lumber I see benefit to a large number of wage-earners."

"Outward glances," she says. "I remember we agree that one gains forgetfulness of the unit—self, so."

"Yes, they are a great help to one," he says, in the strong, firm tone of conviction, steeling his heart against showing sympathy, and speaking in a general way; "for, as I have told you, I, like many other mortals, have missed much that would have made my life complete," and she is sure 'tis a rejection by Mary Gunn he chafes at. "Yes," he continues, "the waters of Lethe for my balm are decidedly in those outward glances of which we have often spoken."

There is a pause, when she says: "I am told the extremes of wealth and poverty at New York city are something terrible."

"They are, indeed," he replies, as they stand for a moment on Sussex-street bridge. "Quite as great a contrast as the

Buildings yonder, standing so proudly regal, with their crowning towers, are to the blackened, mouldy roofs down in the darkness and squalor of Lower Town. 'Tis well that at New York they have such an admirable police system, or the vast human family of the poor, surging and seething, battling and struggling in the social antagonisms, would give no end

of trouble. I went among them doing my mite, under the wise counsel of the mission relief of St. George's Church. I used there to feel as if I had no human right to my own purse, in witnessing the daily struggle of millions for bread. There is a something radically wrong in our civilization. Where is the brotherly love of a common Christianity, of which we prate so loudly to the heathen? Yes, take from Christianity the principle of love, and what is left? A corpse! a husk! a tomb! the life is gone, and it matters not what traditions or ceremonies remain, the relic is no more Christianity than a corpse is a man."

"True, most true. Do you know, Mr. McLean, I feel what you say, and am ashamed to say I find myself frequently playing the rôle of on-looker at church, and thinking sarcastically of our many prayers, and of our giving a stone when asked for bread. I am continually making good resolves, but, alas, I return to this unit self, and try first, and above all things, to make it happy. You have been a very patient listener, Mr. McLean. I have been in a very doleful humor to-day, but, there! I have relieved myself at your expense, and old Boreas has blown away my thinking air, and my *chapeau* as well, I was going to say. It seems always to me as though he gathers the forces of a small blizzard at this Post-Office-square. When did you return to the city?"

"Yestreen," he says, smilingly.

"Ah! that accounts for the looks of welcome thrown your way, and for the spice of envy at me, in the women's faces."

"You flatter me. I can answer for my men friends, that I am the envied one."

On reaching the fashionable promenade, Sparks-street, which is thronged with fur-mantled ladies, young and old, many of them escorted by men from the Buildings, for 'tis after office hours, and the majority of the one thousand Government attachés gallantly divert themselves with Ottawa belles, or *vice versa*.

Many gaily caparisoned steeds fly along with *chic* handsome sleighs, the bells tinkling merrily, the gay occupants bowing to Hazel and McLean, as they turn into Metcalf-street.

"Are you a member of any club or society, this season, Mrs. Leary? one sometimes gets into interesting work through such avenues?"

"No, I am not; my husband takes no interest in anything of that kind, but since my wee pet Maston died I have taken up the study of elocution; my readings sometimes amuse Patrick, and also I assist him in his work for the Department. Sometimes he is sadly behind, poor fellow; he hates systematic work."

"But you should not try to do too much, and should have some little outing every day," he says, noting the worn, even delicate look of the sweet face, though, with the wild-rose bloom from the kisses by Jack Frost, looking lovely as ever.

"Oh, I don't over-exert myself, and go out quite often to Sandy Hill and to Veteran Lodge, and with Mary Gunn we make short work of it often as far as the Cemetery, or down to the Royal Burgh, and," she says, smiling, "the longer my walk the shorter my troubles; but here we are, and if you tell me you can't come in and let us dine you, I shall apologize for having given you a fit of the blues, that you desire to part company with, in some brighter companionship."

"Now, you are making game of me, Mrs. Leary."

"Fair game," she says, with a glance over her shoulder at his blue eyes, as they enter the gate blocked open by the snow.

"Now I know your outing with Dame Nature has benefited you, and I shall with pleasure dine with you and afterwards join your party to the Veteran Lodge At Home this evening."

On the housemaid opening the door, they meet Leary in the hall, who, having rung for the toddy kettle, met Amaranth as they had rung, and taking it from her is making for the stairs. He turns his shifting blue eyes towards them.

"Hello! Haze, is this the way you keep house? McLean, as I live! where the deuce did you drop from! Just in time, though," and he holds the kettle aloft as they ascend the stairs. Mrs. Leary unconsciously turns a look of hopeless despair behind her, not looking at McLean, but feeling that he is a bit of congeniality come into the arid waste of her daily life.

As they ascend the stairs, they hear from the smoking-room the laughter of Miss Belleville, who is convulsed over a story that gay old boy Beauvais has been telling her, his brow growing black as night as he recognizes the voice of McLean.

"What the devil does that sneak want here?" he asks, in smothered tones, leaning towards her.

"He wants to bag your game, Beau," she says, playfully, knocking him on his fat nose with her forefinger. "I bet my chance of appearing at Veteran Lodge to-night—you remember my bet of last summer, that Mrs. Leary should chaperon me thither this season—I bet she has told him, in their pretty little walk, that Pat is not her affinity."

As Hazel and McLean enter, seated in an easy attitude in a padded leather easy-chair, placed in a large bow-window, from whence can be seen the topmost pinnacles and towers of the Buildings, is the large, fair person of Miss Belleville, who, half rising, dropping a half-smoked cigarette under her chair, and the *Graphic* among the heap of newspapers on the table, says:

"How do, Mrs. Leary, you see I am in possession, your husband's persuasive powers were always too many for me, even before you were mapped out for him. Now, Mr. McLean, you need not try to make me believe that you didn't know I was here, for I am quite sure you did, and have come to cross lances with me, as of yore, but I always knock you out the first round."

In the meantime the gay old boy, greeting Mrs. Leary with *empressment*, will draw the sleeves of her seal coat off, allowing his fat fingers to slip up the cuffs of her pretty blue cloth braided walking gown.

And she thinks his attentions are fatherly! Not so McLean, who, going round the barometer with Leary, sees that the old Adam is in possession.

"Yeg," continues McLean, "we are having glorious weather at present, with a blizzard in view," he says, mentally wishing it would blow the obese proportions of Beauvais higher than a kite! "so Wiggins, our weather prophet, predicted to me this a.m.: he says there will be more than one roof uplifted in Lower Town."

"I smell a mice, Mr. Scotchman!" says Miss Belleville, coolly drawing aside the skirts of her handsome maroon-satin gown, knocking the head of the Maltese cat with the toe of her Boston boot: "outside my irresistible attractions, 'twas to make sure that the chimneys of the Quirk estate are adhesive enough to resist a blizzard that blew you from the gay American capital, my virtuous youth. Trust a Scotchman to look after the baw-

McLean joined in the laugh, as she continued :

"I am going to call upon all the relicts of the Quirk estate—I shall take a hack and charge it to the Department—and I shall tell them that, as an absentee, you are a bad lot, and, as an absentee, not to pay you a red cent, for that you spend Ottawa's rentals in Babylon with Mrs. Sodom and Miss Gomorrah, and that I am going in for canonization after what I have heard of you."

"I wasn't aware that any shades of contrast could ripen you for canonization, Miss Belleville," answers McLean, a trifle cynically, as he admires with Leary the oak table with its drawers filled with pipes, cigars, cigarettes and tobacco to delight the smoker.

Mrs. Leary looks up from Toronto *Saturday Night* and New York *Ledger*, she has been skinning, in an easy leather chair, beside the glowing grate.

"Oh, yes, I pose that way now, though Mrs. Leary looks rather dubious, though even she will admit my virtuous leanings when I tell her I have worn this one gown for the past and present month."

"This being the seventh," smiles her hostess.

"Yes, *en vérité*, a sacred number, too, proofs come from unexpected quarters : henceforth I am Saint Adele Belleville, and on to-morrow shall commence my reform tactics at the Buildings, on our merry monarch and his ten merry men.

"You will have your hands full," says McLean.

"Or her arms, you mean," laughs Beauvais.

"Then we'll all pipe 'me to !'" cries Leary.

"You must all excuse me," says Mrs. Leary, rising : "I want a peep at my autoerat of the frying pan." In passing the comfortable sofa on which lies her husband she inadvertently knocks his elbow and the glass of old rye in his hand up his sleeve and onto her gown.

"Dear, dear ! such maladroitness : pardon me, Pat," and in a flash her soft white handkerchief has absorbed all moisture from his cuff : taking his hand between her own, bending over him, she whispers, kissing him : "Don't take any more, dear, it will spoil your dinner.

And a pang of pity comes to McLean's heart as he affects not to hear the murmured words, or see the sweet face bend low to her husband :

Leary, inspired by the presence of Miss Belleville, to prove he is his own master, tosses the remaining half glass full off, saying :

"Here, Haze, brew me another to show ~~you~~ you are sorry, or, no, Adele will, while you give somebody a job at sponging your gown. Here, Adele, lend a hand and leave the Scotchman alone, I see you are making eyes at him, and I don't approve of flirting myself."

In twenty minutes Hazel returns, robed for the Veteran Lodge At-Home, at which she is to read. Very lovely she is in a dinner-gown, the bodice mainly of apple-green velvet with high puffed sleeves over a white mull cap sleeve, the skirt and train pea-green crepe de chine.

The laughter and gay chatter covering her light footfalls, she is upon them ere they are aware, Amariuth announcing dinner at the same moment.

"You'll take the bun in that gown, Haze, even among the biggest guns of the service," draws her husband.

"Thank you, dear."

And McLean cannot repress a thrill of pleasure as the taper fingers are laid on his arm, the large, grey eyes turning momentarily to his own, as she says :

"You see, I am putting my gown in your charge as you pilot me downstairs. Come, Patrick, dear, take Miss Belleville : I am sorry I have no lady for you, Mr. Beauvais."

"So is he," says Leary, "for he'd have to carry her : his rotundity fills the stairway."

And as the gay old boy from behind watches the lithe form of his pretty hostess, he curses McLean's advent.

The oyster soup is excellent, but Leary, complaining of headache, sips his sherry instead, and does but scant justice to a succulent sirloin of beef, McLean saying :

"Tis a noble joint, and better worth knighting than many a man, as Charlie would say were he in the flesh and asked to lift the sword over some of us."

"You should have been here at Christmas, McLean," says his host. "The curlers had a blow-out at 'The Russell,' and our friend here brought down the stane and besom crowd in his response to the toast to the ladies. I tell you what, the saccharine matter just rolled from his mouth. He said it

recalled the time when he was shut up in his mother's preserve cupboard."

"I am sure such a gallant gathering would not be slow in applauding such an able response to the echo," replies McLean, suavely, and seeing the grave look in the face of his hostess, as she observes her husband rapidly succumbing to the influence of the fatal glass, he changes the subject by saying:

"I spent Christmas in bachelor loneliness at the Hoffman House, New York city, if one could be lonely in such a whirling, twirling wheel of fortune as our American Paris—a regular see-saw, with its 2,500,000 inhabitants now in the sunshine, now in the dust! I observed, in converse with the city men, that the organiser of some great speculative scheme held their breathless attention, to the utter exclusion of any other thought."

"Did you speculate while there?" asked Beauvais, cutting Leary short on the respective merits of the lateen, or sloop-rigged ice-boat, not caring a jot, save to draw Mrs. Leary's gaze from the Scotchman.

"I did, and think I am safe in my throw; it is shares in the new Arcade rail. I expect vast amounts manipulated by Wall-street, and other capitalists, come largely from outside pockets."

"But do you think that is to the interest of the city?" enquires Mrs. Leary.

"I can't say I do; that is, when it comes to English gold tying up what should be on the market open for development."

"You seem to be imbued with the go-ahead American spirit, and to identify yourself with the interests of Gotham," says Mrs. Leary, interested, though aching for dessert to be finished, so that her husband will be able to keep his feet from table.

"Yes, the New York life interests me. It takes one so completely out of self," he says gravely, "and I have met some really noble men and women there, and shall return the day after to-morrow to remain until the close of winter. My plan then is to cross the ocean to London, where I purpose to remain one year; afterwards, my intention is to reside permanently at New York."

"The saints be praised," thanks Beauvais, joyfully, though

determining to divide his attention with Mrs. Leary, remarks, "You spoke of the Arcade railroad, McLean; what is its route?"

"From the Battery to Harlem, Beauvais; a distance of from eight to ten miles. Just fancy, Mrs. Leary, one will speed one's underground way ten miles under streets and avenues in twenty minutes. I feel quite enthusiastic over it, and not wholly because I have a few thousand dollars in it."

"No," says his hostess, smiling, "you enthuse for the immensity of the *undertaking*."

"No, a bit of it, Madame Leary," says Miss Belleville, propping up her host to the drawing-room; "it's his own bawbees troubled he's after. He'll smell of money bimeby and hereafter."

McLean joining in the laugh, Mrs. Leary, her hand on his arm, says:

"As the gossips predict, the Londoners will, of the new bank notes they will carry so long."

After half an hour's chat in the luxuriously home-like drawing-room, Hazel, leaving them over their coffee, flies upstairs to don her wraps for the outing to Veteran Lodge, Sandy Hill.

CHAPTER XX.

A SALAAM, A SQUEEZE, A CRUSH, A JAM, A SALAAM!

A slim tenor, and a thick-set bass,
A sylph-like bodice fastened with a lace.

IN HER bed-room Hazel gives no thought as to what she shall read at the Veteran Lodge At-Home, only wondering if she can induce Patrick to accompany her. Even though he has done more than "look upon the wine when 'tis red," the old butler at the Lodge has looked after him before and kept him out of worse company. If

Patrick won't go, and he is always stubborn with too much fire-water, she wonders whether Beauvais, who does not appear to be in his usual good humor, will stay and watch him until her return. As to Miss Belleville, herself and McLean will see her to her quarters at the "Russell," unless she, too, will prove unmanageable and so influence Pat that they keep house together.

After a few moments of hurried thought, arranging the light brown curls on her forehead just to peep from under the becoming rose-pink of her fascinator, her fur cloak over her arm, she steps lightly down stairs.

"Come Pat, dear, it is time we were starting. You look so comfortably lazy, it seems too bad to disturb you, but you know Mary Gunn will be so disappointed if we fail to appear," she says, coaxingly. "See, I will be your *valet de chambre*; here are your over-boots, fur coat and cap; come dear!"

"You'll have to let me off this time, Hazel," he drawls, sleepily. "Pray me to come another time, as Hunter and Crossly have done with the head of the country."

"Oh, Pat!"

"Oh, Haze! You are fond of illuminating texts for my benefit. Here is one for you: 'forgive your brother seventy times seven,' I guess that means letting him off," and he looks at her from under his blood-shot eyes, stretching out his legs towards the brass fender and live grate, as he lies on a sofa.

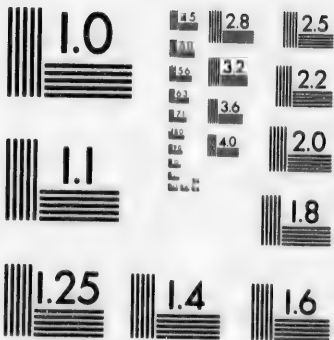
Involuntarily she looks at Beauvais, hoping he will come to her aid by offering to remain with him, but his plans are made, and he won't return her gaze.

"Then I shall stay with you, Pat. Mary will be disappointed, but it can't be helped."

"Tut, nonsense! I hope you are not insinuating that I cannot take care of myself," he says, crossly, eyeing her sweet, troubled face suspiciously; and her thought flies to the night he compelled her to attend the Vilaine river party, nearly six months ago, when she returned to find baby Maston a corpse. "What are you going to do, Adele?" he asks sleepily.

"What's that?" she says, turning quickly from a passage at arms with McLean over the merits and demerits of Mrs. Brown-Potter as Cleopatra, her last remark having been with angry vehemence.





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(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

"Oh, I have no patience with a man of your narrow views. The very idea of your allowing your straight-laced views interfere with your seeing everything the gods offer. You are not worthy of the Quirk estate, a man like you, with your tastes. Tastes! Pshaw! You have none; you are cut out for a primitive, puritan pauper!"

"Adele!"

"Yes, yes; what is it, Paddy?"

"You are so busy making love to McLean you are as blind and deaf to my voice as the head of the country is to the *Globe* on reciprocity. What are you going to do about the Veteran Lodge At-Home?" His wife looked at him in bewilderment as Miss Belleville, rising, says malevolently, as she disappears through the portière hangings into the hall:

"I am going up stairs for my wraps, Paddy, thence to Veteran Lodge with Mrs. Leary; they will, ah, don't you know, be delighted to see me chaperoned so."

With her husband in no mood to be crossed, she, metaphorically speaking, wrings her hands in despair: he closes his eyes in part fatigue in part stupor, and she slips noiselessly into the hall where Beauvais and McLean are getting into their overcoats and boots, the former angry with every one and ill at ease, blaming Hazel for bringing McLean to the house. He has been more than satisfied with her society; why is it that she makes herself sweet and amiable to other than himself? In his jealousy forgetting that his feelings are unknown to herself, and that 'tis well for him it is so, else would she recoil from him in horror.

He knows his pretty, soft-voiced hostess has stolen into the hall to seek comfort, but he will not give it, no, he will not stay with Leary and allow this earnest Scotchman, fully twenty years his junior, to be her escort to and from Sandy Hill, through the electric lighted streets, on this beautiful spring-like night. No, the joys of propinquity shall be his alone.

So now, on her lightly touching his arm, saying softly, with trembling lip:

"Please, Mr. Beauvais, tell me what I ought to do?"

He answers, his heavy eyes blanking in her beauty:

"I am obliged to leave an important document at the Pater-son's, Sandy Hill, in the near vicinity of Veteran Lodge, I

therefore shall escort you thither, just show myself in response to their card, then return at once here, and if, on your home coming, we find it necessary, I shall remain with him all night."

He took a vindictive pleasure in speaking so before his rival, as he persists in considering McLean.

Hazel's face brightens somewhat as she says :

"How good you are, Mr. Beauvais, I hope you both know I would rather remain with Pat, but just now I dare not cross him."

"Could I leave the document for you, Beauvais, then you needn't leave Leary?" asks McLean, in a low tone, while his hostess had gone to the servants' hall.

"*Merci*, McLean, but the walk will please me, and Mrs. Leary is accustomed to me as escort;" of course not confiding that the document has no existence.

Hazel now reappears, Amaranth following with a rug which they place carefully over the sleeping man.

"Watch him well, Amaranth, and tell cook to make a pitcher of strong, hot lemonade, your master may be tempted to try it."

"Yes, m'am!"

Miss Belleville now makes her appearance, an additional bloom on her cheeks, she invariably carrying the war paint in case of accidents.

Beauvais, descending the stairs at her heels, carrying a long seal coat, goes to Mrs. Leary, saying :

"I have seen this garment hanging so often in the spare room, I knew just where to lay my hand on it, you must wear it, the sleeves will be warmer than the cloak; and now we had better be moving, but I must first pick Leary's pockets for the latch key: McLean you had better be moving on, I see Miss Belleville is aching to do some more cross-firing."

But at this juncture the hall bell rings, it is a cabman, who says Col. Gray has telephoned him to call with a sleigh for Mrs. Leary, who, after a parting glance at her husband, and injunction to the maid, enters the sleigh, when they drive off. As they near Veteran Lodge, Miss Belleville says :

"I am jubilant at the shock I am about to give the mothers of marriageable daughters, as I appear on the gilt-edged arm of

our taciturn Scotchman here; a *straight-faced* man has just two recommendations: he can father one onto even Veteran Lodge, and he is obliged to be dumb on the corset question."

McLean winches, looking opposite at the sweet, intellectual face for sympathy, but the heavy fringed eye-lids are drooped in very shame at her enforced chaperonage.

The inviting bright and home-like reception rooms at Veteran Lodge, in their blue and silver prevailing tints, warm with smiles, lights, aesthetic gowns, flowering plants and words of welcome, are crowded when Hazel Leary and her companions enter.

The gay old boy, besides being revengeful and jealous, is also innately selfish, which forces combined cause him to decide on punishing McLean for intrenching on what he has come to consider his preserves, by throwing himself into the humor of Miss Belleville, to appear on the arm of McLean, and so, with the firm, assured air of a man with a will, takes immediate possession of Mrs. Leary. Much, therefore, to McLean's grin, he is obliged by the mis-creator, circumstance, to make his first appearance, after a prolonged absence from the city, at the home of charming acquaintances, in the full glare of the mighty god, fashion, with a woman on his arm who is not received by the "Four Hundred," and with whom a man of his nobility of character would naturally shrink from making himself conspicuous.

The best set in the service are, of course, numerous. The evenings at Veteran Lodge being a real recreation, one meets there the most clever people at the capital, each a stimulant to the other after the boredom of nonentities.

"So there is where the Quirk estate is going," came on the air to the tingling ears of McLean, who, had he been alone or more favorably placed, dozens of fair hands would have been outstretched, both to the heir of the Quirk estate and to the man. As it is, many cold looks, stares of hauteur, and averted faces meet him as he and his companion make their way to the side of Mrs. Gunn, and her father, Col. Gray.

Not so the triumphant Beauvais with the dainty figure beside him, who were greeted with smiles of welcome and murmurs of admiration.

"Gad! What a blank that lovely creature drew. Mona

Caird may jot hers down among the legion of married failures," exclaims a well-placed government attaché to a friend.

"Now, we are sure of a treat," said the sweetest of Toronto's tenors.

"Yes," says a civil servant, "whether she reads or gives me a five-minutes' chat, I am, metaphorically speaking, on my knees to her."

"Hang that old fellow, Beauvais!" cries a splendid-looking man in the Militia Department, "he gets more than his share of the good things of life."

"You are thrice welcome, dear," says Col. Gray, affectionately, "in that your tardy coming caused us to fear we were to miss you all the evening. We received such cheery letters from my other little daughter, Nell, this afternoon. Lunch with Mary tomorrow, Hazel, and read them."

"I will, if I can," she says in an undertone.

"Heavens! That horrid Miss Belleville, and with McLean of all men. He can't be mad enough to have proposed to her, and yet he must, or he would not *dare* to bring her here," cries Mrs. Gunn, wrathfully, to Hazel's ear alone, and covered by the general chatter and piano duet.

"Oh, no, Mary, it is not his fault," she answers, breathlessly, "it is not McLean's fault, he could not avoid it."

"Is *it* a smouldering mystery, Mrs. Gunn?" asks an amused voice beside her. "The drums of my ears are uncomfortably sensitive when your siren notes are the drumsticks."

"What nonsense, George! Mrs. Leary, allow me to present Mr. Beaver, a sedate, whist-loving, woman-hating Toronto lawyer, therefore a lawful acquaintance for you to make."

After a friendly smile and conventional bow is exchanged, Beaver says, dryly:

"Looks like a breach of promise case looming up in the advancing couple. Introduce me; I see by the lady's vigilance she hopes for a big haul. *Spes est vigilantes somnium*. I hope he of the averted eyes has his court train ready, for I'll soon supply him with *rectus in curia*."

But Mrs. Gunn is too angry to smile, and Hazel too troubled, saying, regretfully:

"Don't be angry with Mr. McLean, Mary, dear; he really was drawn into it."

But Mrs. Gunn won't be appeased, saying, ironically :
"I daresay he was, poor babe."

Beauvais feels that he is avenged, as he sees the stern look on the face of his victim. Indeed, so wholly absorbed is he in gloating over McLean's approach, and in endeavoring to overhear the low, murmured talk between Mary Gunn and Hazel, that he pays but scant heed to Col. Gray's amused satire on the shifting morality of the public mind, and of the warm tug of war over the looting of furs in the North-west, as compared to the apathy over the national debt, land grabs, or party perfidy.

Mrs. Gunn's greeting of McLean is perceptibly cool, as compared to her warm welcome when they dined him the evening of his return ; to Miss Belleville she is—ice, barely touching her finger-tips, immediately introducing Beaver, asking him to find her a seat. She does this with no compunctions of conscience, well aware that he will make her yield him sufficient amusement to repay his chivalry, and, judging from the prelude, one may suppose he did.

"Mrs. Gunn and M. Beauvais have the same rôle as the Toronto police," she says, her bold eyes everywhere. "First, the latter tells me to 'move on' with that funeral procession, McLean, now my marching orders are with you."

"At which I consider myself very lucky, Miss Belleville, though it is rather a trying position to be as bewildering as the catch of the season. Still, you must admit I am at least—a fair exchange," he says, banteringly, as he twirls with his left hand his strawberry moustache, his blue eyes brigat with an unusual gleam of mischief.

When they are out of ear-shot, Mrs. Gunn says :

"Only that you did not wear the face of a man in the seventh heaven, Donald, I would not have come to your aid with my 'Toronto friend as substitute.'"

"Blessings on you for it," he says, fervently, "and on fortune for a speaking countenance. It will be a blot on my escutcheon in the eyes of the best half of Ottawa."

"You are right, Donald, but where in the name of wonder did you pick her up? Yet stay ; Hazel, the dear, did what she could in the space offered to excuse you. It must have been at her home ; yes, I see by your face I have hit the mark.

Poor, dear Hazel, there are queer fish in the waters of her life," she says, in rapid, impulsive tones.

"True, most true, and your surmise is correct; we all left Metcalf-street together. But come and have a cup of cocoa; everyone has arrived, and you must be fatigued standing so long."

In a quiet corner of the dining-room he says distractedly:

"You are right, there is positively nothing congenial in her life—what with the two B's, Beauvais and Belleville."

"As far as the old fellow, Beauvais, is concerned," she answers, "he makes himself generally useful, where a younger man would give food for Grundy; as to why Hazel drew such a matrimonial blank out of Fortune's lottery is, what you have before heard, that she married Leary in a fit of sensitiveness over the cuts of Society on her poor father's suicide. We did not like to interfere, as her uncle had told her the sooner she was off his hands the sooner he would be pleased."

"Strange, strange, and now her devotion to him is angelic," he says, pityingly.

"Yes, markedly so, for his unfaithfulness to her is something horrid."

"She could not bear to leave him this evening, but he grew as cross as a bear, and ordered her off."

"No, she does not usually leave unless Beauvais is with him; she cannot forget going home from the Vilaine river party to find poor baby Maston dead, but she does not know, poor thing, that 'twas his father's drunken hand sent him to heaven."

"Horrible! how was it?"

"Leary forced her to go to the Vilaine affair, a fit of obstinate ill-temper having seized him. She could not return until quite late, but about ten o'clock, p.m., Amaranth ran here breathless, and frightened out of her senses, to tell us that after Hazel had gone, the intoxicated father compelled her to give him the baby, ordering her out of the room, and locking her in the back of the house. He then dosed the babe, a favorite pastime of his, with fire-water neat, making it stupid, so the maid, who had crept back by some stray key, judged by the stillness; he then danced it about, setting it screaming and vomiting. All at once there was literally the stillness of death.

cook was out with the child's maid, and Amaranth, in a panic of fright, ran here. We all drove back without delay, excepting that we had to wait till our trusted Delemere came in a hack. It was a dreadful sight, Donald; Leary was in a drunken sleep on the floor *on top* of his infant son, on which he had dragged a couple of Turkish cushions, so smothering his cries. Father telephoned for Dr. Wright, and we all decided to keep the secret of Maston's death from Hazel, but, Donald, I shall never forget the look of the poor mother on her return, standing tense and still in her fragile beauty. Yes, light cares cry aloud, but great ones are dumb; but come away, it makes me mad to think of our loving, lovable Hazel in such a life fix."

Half an hour later finds McLean in a corner of the spacious drawing-room, apparently giving his whole attention to the sweet tenor in "Anchor's Weigh'd," but in reality lost in thought, when he awakes to the present to hear the sweet voice of the woman he is thinking of, say from behind him, "Are you endeavoring to solve the problem of society, Mr. McLean, if so, give it up, for I have found it as puzzling as one from the Sphinx."

"It is, and yet we have solved thus much, and are aware that the whip and lash of social ostracism drive those within its vortex to—perdition! I was going to say," for he thinks of the human wreck she calls husband.

She looks grave, saying, "Yes, many lives are engulfed, but this is not the time nor place to think out problems, let us lose ourselves in a fairy moment of forgetfulness."

"You are a perpetual rebuke to me, Mrs. Leary."

"A sort of wet blanket," she says, smilingly. "See! there is something to brighten us, how pretty the gems in the bow of the violinist glitter and gleam, gleam and glisten in that lovely thing by Vieuxtemps, 'Ballade et Polonaise,' and what a pretty arm Miss Rolliff has. See! see! as the time quickens how the jewels flash, it is as though one can *see* the staccato notes in the flashing lights from the dancing gems!"

But McLean pulls himself together, inasmuch as he finds himself studying the sweet face of another man's wife, rather than admiring the jewelled bow of the violinist; but he tells himself that by this time to-morrow night he will be speeding his way from the Capital, and that she will never be disturbed by his thoughts.

At this juncture, and as if in answer to some latent chord of sympathy, she says, softly :

"You will be weightied with my regrets, Mr. McLean, in your desertion of Ottawa on to-morrow. I am selfishly sorry, for I feel that you could be such a help to one. Such a—moral help," and she looks up at him, a whole soul full of woman trust in her eyes, that for the moment an unusual nervousness possesses him, when, before he can frame a reply, a swarm of butterflies besiege her for a promised reading, while Col. Gray, offering her his arm, in graceful, sinuous motion, she gains the improvised dais at one end of the rooms, and, looking like a picture in a frame of æsthetic drapery, she reads Robert Buchanan's pretty story of "Willie Baird," with such earnest tenderness as to cause throbs of real feeling in the hearts of her listeners. With her largely sympathetic nature, so absorbed does she become in her rendering of the author's meaning, that self-consciousness is totally absent, and she has appealed to all, everyone pressing nearer as to an irresistible magnet, Mr. McLean feeling—

A new born thrill
With magic skill
Throughout his pulses leaping.

A few moments of silence as she concludes, then murmured applause, congratulations, and appeals for something more.

"You have surpassed yourself, Hazel, dear," says Mrs. Gunn, coming to her side, "and I expect that the Snobtons and any of that ilk who are here," she says, for the curtained draperies of the dais tell no tales, "are electrified at finding themselves in possession of an organ of palpitation, and are startled lest they have made too vulgar a display of feeling."

Hazel laughs, yet sighs, for somehow this evening she feels an utter sense of loneliness, that, as with graceful ease she acknowledges the compliments paid her, none suspect.

"*Nous étions ravis*," says M. Coligny, gallantly.

"*Nous vous en félicitons*," smiles Madame Rochefort.

"*Vous avez bien de la bonté*," says Hazel, and in response to their pleadings for just one more, she reads that quaint old thing from the French of 1600, entitled "The Brodered Bodice," giving it with a certain abandon, a charming coquetry

and animation, until the last verse, when her manner borders on the serious, her grey eyes full of luminous depths, as she reads, yes —

“Better a sea where no fish are,
Better the night without a star,
Hills with never a valley set,
Spring with never a violet,
Sweeter were all these things to me,
Than a lying speech to my ladye.”

With more pretty speeches they crowd about her, while muttered maledictions on the absent Mr. Leary were on the lips of the gallant men of the capital.

“The idea of that little fish carrying off such a prize,” says a man in Leary’s department.

“Call him out!” says a Frenchman, twirling the waxed ends of his black moustache fiercely.

“Have a care, Aube. None of the other women will smile upon you, if your moustache droops over the loss of pretty Mrs. Leary,” laughs his friend.

“What think you, McLean, of our popular elocutionist?” asks Col. Gray in pleased tones.

“Well, the fact is, colonel, I pictured her at Steinway or Association Halls, New York city, and also allowed myself to think of what a pleasure it would be to hear her as a platform speaker on some vital question of interest to women.”

“Heresy! Heresy! McLean, and yet your views are merely the natural result of the microbes of democratic reform you have been inhaling for the past six months. But, you are aware, I prefer the old conservative walks and ways for ladies. Give me the old chivalric care of women!”

“Yes, colonel, but our chivalry has been shown to the weakest side of woman; the time has come for us to show it to their strongest, noblest side of character, by yielding to them domination with ourselves over the whole earth!”

“Yes, yes, I would deny them nothing, but the world is too rough for them. Look now at my two daughters, my own Mary and my loving Hazel. I prefer to see them dominate as now, in the drawing-room, in the salon, and the home.”

“Yes, in the home, above all,” says McLean so sadly, as his eyes follow those of his kind host, that the colonel has a

heart full of pity for the man without kindred, whom, next to Rod, he loves as a son.

"Come and lunch with us to-morrow, Donald. I must leave you now, to speed my parting guests."

In a flash, McLean is by the side of Mrs. Gunn, to whom Hazel is saying her adieu.

"Me, I have the pleasure of seeing you safely home, Mrs. Leary?"

"Thank you, Mr. McLean, if you will be so kind."

"Wait, McLean!" cries Col. Gray, as the Scotchman hastily buttons his fur coat. "I am sorry to disappoint you, McLean, but Beauvais got my promise to see Mrs. Leary to the hack he ordered."

"I can, at least, see that the commands of M. Beauvais are obeyed," replies McLean, a trifle cynically, as a pang of disappointment comes to his heart, "and so save you, Gray, the getting into your overboots for a breath of night air."

"Beauvais was particular," smiles Col. Gray, "but it is not the first time I have permitted of a substitute."

Hazel's sweet face, in its framing of rose pink, is held up to kiss him good-night.

"Good-night, my child; Mary expects you to luncheon on to-morrow."

"I will be so glad to come, if *all is well*, she whispers, meaningly.

And though the jealousy of Beauvais has euchred McLean out of a *tête-a-tête* walk, still, the knowledge that the sweetest woman in his world would have been his companion save for this jealousy, sends a thrill of sweet pain to his heart as she takes his arm into the snow-mantled streets to the carriage, their exit being through an avenue of smiling good-nights, in pleasing contrast to the frowns that greeted his entry with Miss Belleville on his arm.

"Is this to be good-bye as well as good-night, Mr. McLean?" she asks, as the driver waits to shut the door of the sleigh, until McLean tucks the robes well about her.

"No," he replies, with a firm hand-clasp, "I lunch at the Lodge on to-morrow; till then, good-night. I do fervently hope you will find everything as you desire at home," he adds, in low, earnest tones.

Here, the Salvation Army passing, the horses prance.

"Oh!" cries Hazel, and her gloved hand is laid involuntarily in his, as it rests on the side of the sleigh.

"Wait a moment, driver, until they pass," says McLean.

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think of the Army? I mean of any good they are doing for poor humanity?" she asks, in rapid, interested tones.

"I believe in the Army, Mrs. Leary, and whenever I meet them, as now, I feel like a drone, as the words of Mrs. Booth recur to my memory, of 'Up, Christians * * put off your sleepiness * * * bend your back to the burden, stoop to pick up the lost.'"

He can see in the snow-light that the grey eyes are suffused with feeling as she listens, answering in tones of suppressed emotion:

"Yes, 'stoop to pick up the lost,' Mr. McLean. I have confided in no one, but will tell you, I am going to the barracks the first day I can manage it, to ask them, *in confidence*, if they will *try* and do something to help my poor husband. And now, good-night, *friend*."

"Good-night, Mrs. Leary; God bless and guide you," and by walking fast and turning into a side street, he avoids the gayly chattering butterflies emerging from Veteran Lodge; and somehow, even in the lapse of long years he never forgets the sweet, troubled face that looked into his from its soft, woollen hood of rose pink, as her sweet lips named him—*friend*.

CHAPTER XXI.

MINISTER OF FINANCE—PRO TEM.

The old fox never forgets to be cunning.

THE morning following the Veteran Lodge At-Home, Hazel Leary arises almost with the dawn, for her hands are full to-day. She will, if possible, go to the Salvation barracks. Afterwards, her fingers must fly in long-hand copying for the Department. Then a bit of sunshine creeping through will be luncheon with the loved ones at Veteran Lodge. Also, a bright letter from Nell is sure to come.

And, now, refreshed by bath and toilet, a long look upwards for strength, a tear for her babe gone home, as she reads, under his pretty picture, lines she had written yesterday of—

"Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels met me and all at once kissed."
Where did you get those rose-pink cheeks?
God called me to Heaven, and I blushed with joy.

Then her daily glance at her mother's picture for comfort, and with her thoughts "kerchiefed in a comely cloud," she descends the stairs, infusing a cup of strong tea for her husband, sending another to Beauvais, whom she hears dressing. Then, seeing that the *Journal*, *Free Press*, *Citizen*, with Montreal and Toronto newspapers, are within easy reach, also, that Leary's traps are all neat and trim, she has mastered the news of the day by the time her husband and the gay old boy are ready to break their fast.

Leary scarcely tastes the tempting dishes, daily prepared, chiefly to whet his appetite, just tasting the delicate buckwheat cakes, herring and omelet. Pushing them aside, he mixes a brandy and soda, which he drinks off hastily.

"Have you quite finished, Mr. Beauvais? Let me send you another cup of cocoa."

"No, I thank you," he says, admiring her pretty wrist as she holds the steaming pitcher aloft, and looks at him kindly. "I have made an excellent breakfast. I only wish Leary had done half as well. You know, empty stomach makes empty head."

"Yours is as sharp, Beauvais, as though you fed on deviled fish-bones, razors, and electric wires," yawns Leary, standing up and stretching himself. "Say, Beauvais," he continues in a whisper, lest his wife hear from up-stairs, "I want you to renew that note for me, it is due to-day but, hang me if I can meet it. If Haze knew how much I owe you—have lost to you, she'd go crazy. Hang me if I know what to make of it. I used to be able to play to win, now I can't play worth a cent."

"Better luck next time: you can make over your life insurance to me, just in a friendly way, for, of course, you'll outlive me."

"No, I'll have a deed of sale of the furniture made out to-day: you have the devil's head for scheming. You'll lend me on Haze, next: but, as you say, the luck must change."

"Of course, it will: but not so loud, Leary," and the old fox draws the portière hangings closer. "I am ready to accommodate you to any length, and merely take your note to cause you to feel at ease about it, for I *know* my money is all right. You will get a good outside berth one of these days: they know you will support the Government. Mind, Leary, I know what I am talking about. Of course, this is *entre nous*. All I ask in return is that you humor me in keeping our money transactions from your wife. *I will not* have her bothered; your hand on it, old man."

"All right, Beauvais: you are a brick, if you have missed being a saint done in white marble. How Adele enjoyed that trick you played on McLean last evening."

"Why, how the deuce do you know?"

"Simple enough: Adele soon tired of the too-awfully-too set at Veteran Lodge, and took a sleigh over here, and killed time with me. I tell you what it is, she kept me alive with the way you saddled her on to that puritan Scotchman. She

surmises that he will clear himself by throwing the blame on you, when he lunches at the Lodge to-day."

"Does he lunch there to-day?" he asks, quickly, his face and head aflame with anger.

"Adele only guesses so, as he half lives there when in town. I know Haze is going."

"How dare he! it is an appointment! just what one might expect from a canting hypocritical fellow like him!" and there and then he decides to lunch there also.

"Keep cool, Beauvais, it don't trouble me; I daresay Haze likes him. We can't expect to have all the go on our side, and you and I have gone it pretty fast, without bit or curb. As long as I can enjoy my little tippie and the diversions that suit me, a fig for her child's play with McLean; and here is to my very good health," and another glass quenches another spark of manliness within him.

Here Beauvais, ever on the scent, touches him on the shoulder as he goes towards the draperies, drawing them aside, admitting his pretty hostess, robed for the winter streets, and carrying her husband's outdoor traps, a maid following with the speckless overboots of himself and friend.

Beauvais, stepping to the hall, comes back ready for the start.

"Pon my soul, Leary, you run through life comfortably," laughs the gay old boy. "There would not be a solitary bachelor to swear by Mona Caird's views on matrimony were there more women after your wife's pattern."

"It strikes me, Beauvais, if you had a wife you would consider all this little fetch and carry business but a poor return for your loss of freedom," he answers, dryly, as Hazel assists him into his overcoat, while the heavy eyes of the gay old boy dwell on her beauty, as he says, with a sigh of pleasure:

"You do not know me, Leary, as how should you, in a rôle you will never see me play," and there is a double meaning in his words which neither of his hearers have the key to. As it is, Hazel experiences a strange sense of suffocation, and longs to be out in a purer atmosphere, as she contrasts the weakly dissipated face and movements of her husband, as compared with the immense form and upright bearing of the immaculate Beauvais.

Ever loath to walk, and careless of the dollar, Leary would telephone for a livery sleigh.

"I am afraid we are very extravagant, Pat, dear; I am going with you to see if you can give me something to do, and would enjoy the walk."

But the gay old boy likes to have her with him in the drive, and, jealous lest she meet McLean, says briskly, as he eyes her trim figure, in grey plaid ulster and cape, bear boa and muff, with coquettish little round hat, its only trimming, a bunch of wild roses, by French fingers.

"I am going to indulge in a drive, the sleighing is splendid! so my dear Mrs. Leary, you will allow me to be *pro tem.* minister of finance," he says, with a wink at Leary.

The pile of buildings is soon in sight, catching every gleam of the morning sun from the noble plateau on which they stand, a bright contrast to the dark lower level of Lower Town.

Emerging from the sleigh, and mounting the great stone steps at one of the entrances to the block in which the department to which Leary is attached is situate, the tall sentry swinging open the heavy oaken door, in passing through one of the corridors they come upon Miss Belleville, chatting familiarly with a messenger, while procuring from him some blotting paper from the locked-up Government stores, showing also no disinclination to frivol generally with any chance man in passing.

"*Je n'y manquerai pas,*" she says, laughingly, to a clerk who has begged a favor. "Hello! Paddy—and Mrs. Leary," she adds, with a profound courtesy, "you look as solemn as if you were attending your own funeral; better join me in Mr. Pedro Gosling's den, for a sherry and sandwich luncheon."

"Not I," draws Leary, "that old Blue Beard only cares for you women."

"*Tres bien,* I'll see you after office hours, about our skating party."

"All right, Adele."

"Patrick!" says his wife, in persuasive tones, her hand on his arm, "if Miss Belleville asks you to go on the ice, don't go, it is unsafe, and, besides, we have not had a quiet evening together for ever so long, dear."

"Oh, hang it, Haze, a fellow must have a little diversion some times; I have business down town this evening, in any case."

and opening the door of his office, sinking lazily into his luxurious chair, in front of the handsome desk. With a look of disgusted *ennui*, he arranges his work for the day, giving his patient wife her share; while she, seeing that he is in no mood to be coaxed or caressed into a promise for his own good, bidding him an outwardly cheerful good-bye, with light, rapid steps, leaves the buildings—her lithe figure, erect head, and graceful carriage, causing many a man to allow the ink to dry on his pen as he turns to the window to catch a fleeting glimpse of her as she passes.

Reaching home, giving a busy half-hour in directing the household machinery, an hour to Government work, with a few bright lines to Nell, for she will not plant sad thoughts in the mind of another. Nell is well aware her life is no rose bed, but talking of the thorns in one's path does not lessen them.

And in two hours' time, as she walks to Sandy Hill and Veteran Lodge, in the pure, bracing, frosty air, her step grows more elastic, her cares lighten, and the tonic of a pleasant anticipation glows in her grey eyes.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GAY OLD BOY LOOKS AFTER HIS INTERESTS.

"Age cannot alter nor custom stale her infinite variety."



MR. GUNN hastens to the hall, giving Hazel a warm greeting.

"You truant! I thought we were to have a long morning together."

"So did I, Mary dear, but the fates were in force against me this a. m."

"Hazel! Hazel!" laughs Col. Gray, from the library. "Is it you I hear, blaming the ancients in such modern chips as this a. m. Come here, and wish McLean and I good morning, as when you get away with Mary, heaven only knows

when we shall see you. When did you add the rouge-pot to your armory, child?" he asks, banteringly patting her cheek.

"Since I breathed the frosty breath of old winter in my rapid morning walk, sir," she replied, in mock dignity, curtseying low and giving her hand to McLean in good morning, when, with her arm in Mary's, she is carried off.

On their footfalls dying away, Col. Gray, pulling his grey moustache fiercely, stamps his foot, so crushing a bit of mignonette fallen from Hazel's bodice, and almost coming on the hand of McLean, who is picking it up from the rug of tiger skin. "Oh, I beg pardon, Donald, your hand had a narrow escape, for when my foot goes down it goes emphatically. Ah! I see a poor little blossom with the life crushed out of it which emphasises what I was about to remark, that our dear friend Hazel Leary is having the life crushed out of her by that shattered wreck she is chained for life to. If it were not for her brave spirit, she would have succumbed long ago. Mary tells me of how shocked you were on hearing of the tragic death of her poor babe. Though Hazel is beloved by every one, no one goes to her home except her very truest friends, on account of the dislike they have of perchance rubbing shoulders with Miss Belleville. Poor Hazel! Poor, poor child!"

"Yes, indeed," says McLean, brokenly. "I tell you what it is, colonel, if I had not witnessed her sweet, womanly patience, nay, tender attitude towards her husband on yesterday, and courtesy to Miss Belleville, I would not have believed as I do now of the heroism in woman."

"She is an angel, McLean, and the very fact of her having wed Leary - without love on her part, which compact he was more than satisfied with, causes her to be more loving and forbearing with him."

Ere the words had died on his lips, they see from the window Beauvais and Beaver, the somewhat cynical, withal luxurious, Toronto barrister, enter the grounds laughing and chatting as they come up the frost-encrusted path, ring the bell and are admitted, when instantaneously Col. Gray banishes the feeling that a quiet luncheon with the Scotchman on the eve of his departure for a lengthy absence, together with Hazel, would have been his wish: but, donning society's mask he welcomes the two men as though life is one long summer

day, and the Prince of Darkness chained in some nethermost hell!

And now the women friends leave Mary Gunn's cosey boudoir, Hazel in a fetching gown of soft blue and green plaid, with vest and high puffed sleeves of green velvet, her bright hostess wearing a mixture of grey woollen and old rose satin.

"From grave to gay, which sends the corners of our mouths in the right direction," says Mary Gunn, "and so left wheel, eyes right, quick march to take the gentleman captive; even though George Beaver says, that, until he meets a woman who can hold him, and keep him from a wish to rove, he will keep his freedom. Though, in my opinion, he, as well as a legion of men, have for their motto, previous to as well as after marriage, *Si l'amour a des ailes n'est pas pour voltiger*? Hazel, your walk has given you such brilliant cheeks, George Beaver will think it a hypodermic blush!"

At which Mrs. Leary laughs as the gay old boy draws the portière-hanging aside for their entry, and it is rather amusing to Beaver to see the way in which he appropriates pretty Mrs. Leary, having stood by the mantel until she entered, when, with a long step, he is by her side. After a few minutes the talk becomes general and turns on society's craze for At-Homes, and of how pleasant was the one of last evening.

"When I took my regretful leave," says Beauvais, with a look that, in a clever way, covers his hostess, but rests on Mrs. Leary, "you, Beaver," he goes on, banteringly, "were in possession of one of our belles."

"Or, she of me," sighs Beaver, not appearing to know who was referred to, and wishing Beauvais would not allude to Miss Belleville, whose presence had been so distasteful to Mrs. Gunn. "None of the women of last evening stayed long enough to give me time to wish them gone. Some consumptive-looking dude was sure to attract and carry them off, notwithstanding my fair proportions."

"Black, brown or grey locks, versus red," says Mrs. Gunn, teasingly.

"Oh, *you* have no taste," he replies, carelessly.

"Some one," says Hazel, "gives a definition of a dude sounding somewhat like a patent medicine advertisement. It

is, that 'a dude is a pimple on the body of society, showing that society's body is out of condition.'"

"That is good," says Col. Gray. "If we had to rely on such blotches for our soldiers, our British battlements would soon cease to float a union jack."

"Indeed, yes," remarks McLean, heartily. "I heard a grand lecture at New York recently on a model commonwealth, and though I was not in sympathy with the lecturer, outside his lecture, the way he hit at tailor-made creatures, their highest ambition to be versed in the latest fad of fashion—when society's body is so out of condition, struck a chord akin. In conclusion, the lecturer drew a noble picture of what a manly, unselfish feeling of a common brotherhood, would do, in building up a model commonwealth."

"The lecturer must have been a pronounced crank," broke in Beauvais, who could have horsewhipped McLean for arousing the look of interest in the face of his pretty neighbor. "I remember, now, McLean, that you yourself were always surcharged with schemes for giving plum-cake to the masses," he says, with the air of a man dismissing a lunatic, while turning to Hazel, insinuatingly:

"When in town this morning, I heard numerous compliments paid you as an elocutionist, and expressions of wonder at your retentive memory."

Now, the gay old boy has not been abrupt. He is too polished a man of the world for that, but it seems to Hazel that there is now a discord somewhere. She does not feel in tune with this transition to herself, and though she replies with her usual gentleness, Beauvais observes, with latent jealousy, that she again leans backward, her face losing its glow of interest.

"People are very kind, but as for my memory being retentive, Emerson says, that 'every time one says a thing in conversation, one gains a mechanical advantage in the detaching of it well, and delivering.'"

The butler now announcing luncheon, Colonel Gray, with the affection of a father, says, jestingly:

"After that modest speech, child, I hope you won't think it immodest in me to offer my arm."

Mrs. Gunn leads the way to the dining-room, its walls covered with family portraits, its sideboard, crystal cabinet,

buffet and butler's tray, each bearing substantial witness to the hospitality of the lodge.

The bright hostess says, over her shoulder, gaily:

"When my conventional parent lunches from home, we go in *sans ceremonie*, someone taking in everybody."

"And a good idea, too," echoes Beaver, ruefully, "for then a poor fellow like this one—Beauvais may speak for himself—would have a chance."

"The conventionalities are growing into a prodigious bore," says McLean.

"All the fault of the women," cries Beaver, "consequently, we bachelors are on the increase; I can assure you it is as true as Matthew, Mark or Luke, that at the Queen City there are a dozen barristers nearly as good-looking as myself, who sit in their offices with pens behind each ear, sighing for breach of promise, or any other money-stirring case, to enable them to build up a solid income, before they dare throw a second glance a woman's way. A man in counting his coppers has to remember what it costs to dine his wife after he has saved enough to buy her," he says dryly, with a daring glance at his hostess, when, to all intents and purposes, his whole attention is given to a plate of scalloped oysters."

"Poor fellow," says Mrs. Gumm, endeavoring to catch his eye, "their own club-dinners don't cost anything, you know."

"A mere bagatelle," he replies, lightly. "Why, McLean, that young woman who so cruelly deserted me last night for a pimple on the body of society, in the vulgar tongue, collars and cuffs, did nothing but rave, as the women say, over your diamond ring, and owned up that she had been engaged half a dozen times. The attraction, not the man, the diamond solitaire. What do you think of that?"

"Just this, Beaver, that the poet referred to her in, 'Dumb jewels often in their kind, more than quick words do move a woman's mind,' but we all know, if we know anything of woman, that she is as various as the weeds by the sea, or the pearls in its depths."

"I believe you, McLean. They are as various as the millinery and gown bills we have to pay for to keep up with the Felix, Redfern, Murray trousseau she came to us in. Lady Montague's outfit of petticoat and shift, would not content our dear women."

"Jove, no!" laughs the gay old boy, "a dear little bustle would have to be thrown in."

"Such audacity, and before my face, too! Hazel, dear, come to the rescue, you have been attentive enough to papa. These men are positively shocking!"

"How, dear?" and the grey eyes open wide, the look of inquiry lending an additional youthfulness to the sweet face.

"We were on the bustle, Mrs. Leary," says Beauvais with mock gravity, "but as a woman told me they were built out of reform papers, which you invariably turned your back on, we condone the offence."

"Oh!" says Hazel, "how kind of you! But talking of reform, Nell tells me in her letter dated yesterday, that woman's enfranchisement was actually discussed at Rod's club at Toronto, and uncle being in a good humor the evening of the debate, allowed her to go down. Nell says she was quite amused, and before the close, the bill (in this mock parliament, you know), had won her vote. First, she says, the member from Muskoka took the floor, ably supporting the bill in spite of opposition efforts to get him mixed. Then another member wasted his eloquence on the reverse side, in the time-worn cry of the 'hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.'"

"Next," she says, "a really clever member threw away his oratorical powers in airing the word 'obey,' until she fervently prayed it might fall a victim to la grippe, and he heard of no more; she further says there are not a few orators, and even some patriots in the club, that she is in hopes the country will yet send to Ottawa."

"I fervently pray we shall never see the anomaly of a woman lawgiver here!" exclaims Colonel Gray. "I beg your pardon, McLean, if I have trod on your toes."

"Not at all, colonel."

"I *used* to be of the opinion, Colonel Gray," says his daughter, laughingly, "that you of the service have your mouths held by bit and bridle, but, lo! we hear you giving your vote against woman enfranchisement. Father sometimes gives me food for mirth in his supposed after-dinner nap behind a newspaper, when wide-awake ejaculations startle me, such as—'Ah, what would Luther and Calvin say?' or 'Yes, Mercier has us by the

nose." "Sprung the election just at the saving moment."
"Salisbury tilting with Blaine, eh?" "Gladstone can't shake
hands with Gladstone there;" and then the newspaper falls
with a rustle, as my dear governor scratches his head over reci-
procity."

At this there is much merriment, Colonel Gray saying,
dryly:

"Gentlemen, a toast: Woman! we need not eulogize her,
she speaks for herself, and at times for us."

"Mrs. Leary," says Mrs. Gunn, with mock dignity, "I call
upon you to respond. I have chosen the better part of this
pear."

Hazel, rising, says, in her sweet, dulcet tones, a gleam of mis-
chief under the momentarily drooped eyelids:

"Gentlemen, we thank you for your admission that we at
last, in the nineteenth century, may speak for ourselves, and
we do so with confidence, as how could it be otherwise, having
listened at your feet in the rolling backward of the centuries.
You who were created first, as a matter of course, have had
the first say, but we are sure you will admit that the first word
is a small matter as compared with the immense advantage we
enjoy in our speechifying, in that the Master hand, while form-
ing your lordly selves out of the dust of the ground, did form
us out of *'your'* highly-elaborated and perfectly-constructed
side."

"Well done," says the gay old boy, his deep tones and half-
closed gaze of stealthy admiration of the woman being covered
by the general laughter.

"You would make a very fair platform speaker, Mrs. Leary,"
remarks McLean.

"Not bad for your quiet Scotch friend," says Beaver, in an
undertone, to his hostess.

"Why, what was it?" she asks.

"That she would make a very fair platform speaker."

"Oh!" and for the first time it occurs to her that McLean
would have been a fitting mate for Hazel, and for the first time
she observes his care-worn look.

"Mary," asks Colonel Gray, "did you tell Hazel of the dread
blunder in, I think, the *Figaro*?"

"No, father, 'tis on an obsolete and ancient subject."

"Tell it me, colonel, I love the old."

"Thank you, dear; an American wag wrote that, 'Notwithstanding that a lady should be always quiet and self-contained, she cannot even enter a place of worship without a tremendous bustle;' to his intense amusement he read in a Paris newspaper, it reproduced as, 'According to an American author, the ladies of his country are so greedy of notoriety that they cannot enter the holy sanctuary without disturbing the kneeling worshippers with their vulgar and unseemly ado.'"

"Very good! Capital!" laugh the gentlemen.

"Very bad! *I say*," says Mrs. Gunn. "Unseemly ado, indeed! A nice name to call it. Come, Hazel, we shall leave Col. Gray and this mirthful trio to quiet their nerves over a cigarette."

"Take me with you, please," begs McLean. In the drawing-room he rolls a divan over to the brass fender and glowing grate.

"Not for me, Donald, thank you. You may have a chat with Mrs. Leary, while I strike the chords as running accompaniment," and seated at her silver-toned Bell piano, she plays, now the gay notes of some catching air, drifting to sweet waltz notes, thence to heart-stirring opera. Then singing a favorite of McLean's from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, "Beauteous Idol of my Heart," her fine voice bringing Beaver from the dining-room to her side. Beauvais on pins and needles to join the deserter, his jealous fears telling him that McLean is too near to Hazel; but Col. Gray, little divining the wish of his companion, talks on in lazy enjoyment.

At last he can endure it no longer, so with consummate tact, putting on a listening air, wonders what that lovely thing is that Mrs. Gunn is playing.

"What! tired of your smoke, already? Let Stephen fill up your glass of still hock. That's right. Though a contemporary of my own, Beauvais, your heart is as young as ever and has still a soft spot for the ladies. Losing a good wife, as I have, ages one," he says with a sigh, "but I have the best of daughters, three of them now, for dear little Nell Carew will soon be one of us, and Hazel Leary is always as a dearly loved daughter, to whom I must say, old friend, you have proved yourself a second father," he says with feeling, not aware

of the want of relish the gay old boy has for his concluding remark; which remark, though entering the drawing-room "like the two kings of Brentford smelling at one nose gay," causes one at least to feel *en lance*.

Beauvais, closing his ears to the crisp chat of Beaver and Mrs. Gunn, with his close-cropped grey head on one side, his carnally handsome face wearing a listening air to a Moonlight Sonata Mrs. Gunn is giving them, he is, in reality, straining his ears to catch the drift of the low murmured converse between Hazel and McLean. At last he "catches on;" 'tis of the Salvation Army they speak, and though relieved, his passion for the fair woman will cause him to break in if the *tête-à-tête* is not dissolved in some other manner. Now their voices are more audible, and he solves, though only stray words, that they are on McLean's coming departure.

"I grieve that you go, for you are not a friend of ifs and buts, a friend of circumstance or chance, no! And yet, after to-night, I lose the moral support of such friendship."

"Yes, it must be so for personal reasons," he says gravely. "I go to New York direct, staying over an hour, perhaps, at Toronto, to see Rod., and, if possible, his sweet little bride-elect. I shall like to carry the memory of their happy faces with me. I shall be in the old world at the time of their marriage, so cannot be 'best man,'" he says, with a shadowy smile, "however, I shall be back here at Ottawa for one day in February, and shall call at Metcalfe-street, and fervently hope to find your home life more—congenial."

"But who will manage your estate business during the year you will be at London, England?"

"Messrs. Hodgins and Rutherford, my lawyers."

"Yes, and yet I hope you will find it to your interest to return to Ottawa, and—all of us."

"Mrs. Leary, do you not understand that one's wishes—at times, are one's temptations, and *must* be denied if one desires one's higher, nobler self to gain the ascendancy."

"Yes, yes, I do, indeed, I do understand, and I want you, my friend, to feel that it is so," and even as she replies she fancies his eyes turn with regret to Mary Gunn, and again she is sure he is the rejected suitor of the brightly chattering pianist. There is a momentary pause, when she continues:

"I shall try and remember your strengthening words of counsel to myself, and this silver band," she says sweetly, "shall be a reminder of them. You don't know, Mr. McLean, of how I prize this bracelet, your and dear Mary's thoughts encircling my wrist. What lines would you choose to have engraved for Mary?"

Without a moment's hesitancy he replies, "Age cannot alter nor custom stale her infinite variety;" but for you, pure as the snow, than morning's dawn more bright, they are entirely typical of you," he says, so earnestly, with, in the saddened eyes of Beauvais, an all too-long look into the sweet face of Hazel, that the gay old boy can no longer endure it, and so in a moment he is slipping a fat hand between her pretty shoulder and the back of the divan, as he says in thick tones:

"Take pity on me, Mrs. Leary, I have been boasting to Colonel Gray of your progress at chess, at which he seems rather incredulous, will you prove my words in a game?"

"Certainly, Mr. Beauvais, if the dear colonel is indulgent enough to desire to witness my very unsoldierly manner of running away from the enemy—frantic efforts to avoid the being checkmated. Excuse me, Mr. McLean," and glancing over her shoulder as she speaks, there is a slight inflection of regret in her tones—an unmistakable look of regret in her eyes.

McLean, making a note of the C.P.R. time from the *Citizen* columns, Mrs. Gunn, leaving the piano, would have joined him, on which Beaver's face elongated so that McLean, with praiseworthy denial, says:

"Not so, Mr. Gunn, as this will be my last glimpse of home life for some time, I do not wish to leave an unfavorable impression by monopolizing the maker of sweet sounds. Please let me carry away with me as many of your notes as I can in the—phonograph of my memory; and see! you are leaving me in the company of James Payn's clever notes in the *Illustrated London News*."

"*Tres-bien*, my imperturbable Scotchman, and I shall carry in the phonograph of my memory the fact of your preferring the company of any man in—paper form too, to my—charming self."

The dark-blue eyes of McLean turn to her face with a smile as she returns to the once more contented Beaver.

And so the afternoon wears away, McLean skimming the journals, ever seeing the sweet face of Mrs. Leary, now in puzzled thought, her pretty chin resting in the palm of her hands, again bright with the flush of victory. More than once to the annoyance of Beauvais—who knows he should be at the Buildings but will not leave—he detects his partner's large grey eyes turn towards the solitary figure of McLean, when, making some trivial excuse by changing his position he is practically a wall of partition between them.

The silvery chimes of an Italian marble clock ringing half-past three recalls to the absorbed McLean an appointment with his lawyers, and so he quietly makes his adieux, Colonel Gray saying he will walk with him to the corner of Sparks and Metcalf-streets on his own way—late though it will be—to the Buildings, for Colonel Herbert has an eye on the pigeon holes of the Department, with a soldier's eye for minutiae.

McLean, scarcely trusting himself to look at Hazel, almost crushing her slim hand in good-bye, is gone.

"I weep salt tears that we have had to say good-bye to our dear old Scotch Donald," says Mrs. Gunn, with regret, to Beaver's ear alone; "he is unhappy notwithstanding his apparent cheerfulness. I wonder if any woman has been foolish enough to decline to take his honest, manly hand through a life trip?"

"No, you may take your affidavit on it; his hands are too full of bank notes, and you, Mary Gunn, know, your sex are—feline."

"Feline, indeed! what next?"

"Anything you like," he says, coolly, "but I should think feline comprehensive enough, it means selling yourselves for a drawing-room car through life, or, in Biblical language, for a 'mess of pottage.'"

"Never mind, sir, I shall remember your comments. Feline! and feminine Esaus!"

"Just so, Mrs. Gunn, and you cannot help it, it's the way you are constituted—so to speak—it is only being good tradeswomen (in spite of blue blood), it is only giving your charming selves—when you are charming—for the warmest corner and the creamiest cream. Yes, you are decidedly feline, and as decidedly feminine, Esaus; very, common noun, plural

numbers: we are Jacob, and though in Holy Writ the latter gentleman is never blamed, in my opinion he took a rather mean advantage of a hungry man."

"So far, so good, Mr. Beaver: I am glad to see you are just enough to give even the shadow of blame to the men we trade for pottage with."

"Oh, that's all right, don't flatter me, you see I cannot help being just, with the aroma of Osgoode Hall, Toronto, about me."

"That all sounds very well, George Beaver, but you may ponder this as you chew the cud of your cynical fancies, that did I argue this case before all the judges who ever sat in Chambers at Osgoode Hall, I should make it clear, even to their red-tape brains, that we women sometimes actually prefer, 'lean liberty to fat slavery.'"

"Check-mate!" cries Beauvais.

"It sounds as if that might be for me," says Beaver, looking into the flashing eyes of his companion.

"Yes, you are victorious, once more, M. Beauvais," says Hazel, putting away the chessmen, "how I should enjoy conquering, cornering, defeating, and routing your knights and pawns, making prisoners of your kings and crying check mate!"

"How cruel are your tones," and his pulses quicken as his hand brushes hers in assisting her, though she is as unmoved as if he were an automaton.

"Would you not have Hugo victor, sometimes?"

"Why, yes, of course, but not always," and closing the board, she crosses the room, joining the others.

"Your work-basket is in its usual state of pretty confusion, Mary, *ma chère*," and with deft fingers she sorts and winds the bright-colored flosses. "Why did you not give this tangle to Mr. Beaver, Q.C.,—in embryo—to file?" she asks, guily.

"Him! I expect if we could come a glimpse of his clients' papers we would find them all in the wrong pigeon holes; he is rather a neat man, personally, whist practice and going to court compel him, but when it comes to filing!"

"I trust you have the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit about you, Mr. Beaver," says Hazel, in duet with a laugh from Beauvais.

"Oh, yes, I invariably carry the ornament in this presence ; but don't be deceived, Mrs. Leary, Mrs. Gunn only affects this hostility towards me just at present because we differed on some cases of barter we were discussing ; but I can assure you in her submissive moments she has confided in me that in me she sees embodied the Nestor of the Toronto bar !"

"Don't smile child, or he will be vain enough to think you believe him," says Mrs. Gunn, coolly, "what would the law firms at Toronto say to this Nestor of their bar ? But breath fails me, I subside."

"You'd better, Mary," laughs Hazel, "for I see by the steel-blue gaze of your legal friend that for him 'a sweeter strain than that of grief is revenge that drowns it,' so before he passes sentence upon you, I shall flee. Pat will have left the Buildings some time ago, so I leave you to your cruel, but deserved fate."

"Thank you, Mrs. Leary. When on the bench I shall not forget my charming advocate. In the meantime I shall attend to this case."

"Go to Portia, I denounce thy advocacy !" says Mrs. Gunn, adding lightly, "but enough of this 'frivol.' When am I to see you again, dear ?" and accompanying her to the door, taking affectionate leave of her ; returning, watches with Beaver from a window of the drawing-room as she goes down a frozen path, followed by the ponderous form of the now contented Beauvais.

The gay old boy finds his companion a little silent and pre-occupied during their walk to Metcalf-street, and though jealous lest her thought be with McLean, her *au revoir* is so kind as he waits to ascertain if her husband is at home, that he tells himself her quietude is the restfulness of being alone with himself after the incessant talk with society, even though at a friend's house.

But man cannot always read a woman's heart, which is deep as the bed of the river into which they gaze, the mirrored surface reflecting his face being the index to his own.

At Veteran Lodge Mrs. Gunn, sending Beaver for a run to town, bidding him return with her father to dine, as he will leave for Toronto by way of the city of the isles, Kingston, on the morrow.

An hour before dinner finds her in pretty home dinner gown, a demi-toilette of black silk and lace,

As an appetizer, they discuss whether closer trade relations with the United States would be better ; Mary, though, hoping the three thousand leagues of artificial barriers will soon be swept away. The men's votes declare for things as they are, restricted markets. Olives are not eaten at table, as they have taken instead the Jesuit incorporation act ; from thence the respective characters of thoughtful Wilhelm of Germany, and our own loved Prince of Wales are on the tapis, as also whether trade with South America and the West Indies, or that with more distant Australia, should be encouraged, Mary's yea bringing in a vote deciding for the former. And then, during a few minutes' absorbed dive, by Colonel Gray, into the dailies, Beaver says, his voice covered by the *entre nous waltz* :

"You have voted with me on two or three public questions, Mrs. Mary Gunn, how is it that you will *persist* in opposing my view of the idiocy displayed by the Japanese in preferring the cold salaam to the warmth of osculation. I *believe*, remember, that privately you deem them *fools*, but that in a fit of womanly obstinacy you won't give in."

"Oh, you do, do you ? I was under the impression that we agreed to allow that saccharine argument to drop ; I wonder who is obstinate now, Mr. George Beaver. I define a man," she says, softly, "as a kissing animal. My son, Stuart, is nearly as tall as myself, and I am going to instil the Japanese preference for the graceful salaam into his youthful mind. I trust at Ridley college they instruct him that, in ancient Rome, if a man kissed his betrothed but died previous to their marriage, the woman was entitled to half his effects," she says with a bewildering smile.

"Dinner is served," says the butler.

And as she lays her hand on his arm, in preceding her father to the dining-room, he bites his strawberry moustache in a baffled sort of way.

Over their dessert, and with no servitor to report, Colonel Gray asks Beaver what he thinks of Beauvais, now that he has met him quite often.

"Oh, he is a good fellow enough, he and I are quite chummy when we meet ; he is jolly company, and all that sort of thing,

and if your pretty friend, Mrs. Leary, was a flirting woman, I should say that Leary would be better employed looking after his preserves than his bottles; for the old boy's heart is soft, and she is alluring. There is always a woman in the case, colonel."

His host laughs good-humoredly, saying, with emphasis:

"I am glad I led you to speak out, Beaver, for I fancied you were of some such opinion, but take my word for it, you are in error: for only yesterday, and to himself, I alluded to his fatherly care of Mrs. Leary, and he, Beauvais, took it quite for granted. Did he take advantage of his position to foster within himself any such feeling, he would deserve to be shot."

"I should say so," said Mrs. Gunn, disgustedly. But with his knowledge of men, Beaver is unconvinced; moreover, he knows Beauvais in his carnal moods, which Colonel Gray does not."

And could Beaver see him now, his opinion would be strengthened, having brought home Leary in the dusk through the snow-clad streets, stending him to the lounge in the snug smoking-room at Metcalf-street, where he now lies listening to the chips from Miss Belleville's day, and of mutual experiences of a dance at Madame Vilaine's, while the gay old boy leisurely puffs his pipe, buried in a padded leather easy chair, occasionally putting in a word: his eyes aswim with enjoyment as he watches his pretty hostess, apparently buried in knitting a pair of fine socks for her husband. But she sees again the face of McLean, though wearing a look of inward trouble, brighten as she calls him *friend*: but the gay old boy is full of pleasurable emotion, for he knows not her thoughts as he imprisons her ball of wool in his fat paws, unwinding for her as she knits.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PATRICK LEARY BOWLED OUT.

"Like a fair white flower lies she,
Helpless, but oh, they fend her, O,
Pale, pale her cheek, and closed her ee,
But loving hands attend her, O."

FIVE weeks elapse, and McLean pays a flying visit from our American Paris, New York city, to the tower-crowned, snow-bound capital of Canada. And though he has tried to school himself into forgetting sweet-faced Hazel Leary, he finds his heart beating wildly with the hope of meeting her; but giving himself the lash, taking the opposition benches against himself, he occupies the whole of his first day with business, giving his lawyers a power of attorney, then at the close of the winter afternoon as he is wending his way to Veteran Lodge, knowing, that if at home, the inmates will welcome him, immediately in front of the "Russell House" he comes upon Mrs. Gunn.

"Donald McLean! I am so glad to see you! If you were a woman I would bestow a kiss upon you. See what you miss; come away this minute to Veteran Lodge, we will dine you."

"Thank you," he says, gladly.

Here Beauvais, emerging from the "Russell," joins them as spy on McLean's movements.

"Have you seen Mrs. Leary?" she asked, eagerly. I know she wants your advice about something."

"In that case I shall call in the morning, before I leave town; she is well, I hope," he says, in self-repressed tones.

"No, I can't say she is," she replies, hesitatingly, though bright as 'tis possible.

The gay old boy now leaves them, having got on the inner track.

The result is that he arranges that Hazel's whole attention is given to her husband the following morning, and Govern-

ment work, he himself going to Metcalf-street, and when leaving, giving strict orders to the maid that her mistress was not at home to any one, so that Hazel, in the confused medley of her life, never sees his card destroyed by Beauvais; never hears he has called; and so, while he is trying to forget her on the broad Atlantic waves, having told Rod. Gray as he wished to forget Ottawa to drink of the waters of Lethe, as far as his friends there were concerned he would not correspond with him during the year of his absence; but that if Rod. did, by chance, write him at London, England, to let it be purely on business. Rod. Gray, though in wonderment, obeys, trusting in his friend's having the best of reasons for his request. So that twelve months elapse ere at London, England, by chance, he hears that Patrick Leary met a tragic death one week after he had left Ottawa *en route* for the sea-board.

Six weeks after Pat's death the letter-carrier delivers at Broadacres, North Toronto, among other letters, the following from Hazel Leary to Nell Carew, giving her the particulars of the accident, which she has been too unnerved to write earlier.

The once handsome form of Carew, much wasted, having lost the use of his limbs by the paralytic stroke of the summer previous, is being wheeled from the library—his present bedroom—to the drawingroom, now cheerful and homelike, the outcome of Nell's happiness.

"See! uncle dear," she says, joyfully rising from among a pile of new house-linen she is, with the assistance of Betsy, artistically marking and fringing. "A letter from Hazel the dear, that is a signal of returning health; is it not a fat one? See, uncle!"

"Yes, a regular dead weight," he says with a grim smile at the mourning envelope.

"I'll read it aloud, uncle, but first let me wheel you where you can see out of the window and catch the warmth from the hot water register," and lifting a favorite Turkish cushion, she squats upon it, her pretty plaid gown about her. Betsy rising to leave the room, Nell says, with an amusing air of authority, at which her uncle smiles:

"Stay, Betsy, and go on with the fringing. You, too, would like to hear a letter from poor Mrs. Leary, even though the tone be sad."

"OTTAWA,

"APRIL. METCALF-STREET.

"MY OWN DEAR SISTER NELL:

"First, let me thank you, dear, for your almost daily letters, which have been the most bracing tonics to me. I would have been but a poor, wilted creature without them, for Mary Gunn's prolonged absence at St. Catharines, nursing her boy Stuart, has left me desolate, indeed, save for the good, though rather depressing, presence of Mrs. Louis.

"This is my second letter to-day. I am at last able to superintend my large house-full of boarders, but Mr. Beauvais, who has always been like a father to me, had a long talk with dear Col. Gray and Mr. and Mrs. Louis, and they agreed, so it seems, that as poor Pat left his money matters in the greatest confusion, it is best for me to keep this house on, in this way, for one year. Mrs. Louis tells me that Mr. Beauvais, with his usual kindness (though I would prefer to know now), is determined to be silent on business matters until after the birth of my poor fatherless babe.

"And now, dear, to recall incidents that I can never forget. It is just six weeks ago. Will the memory of that afternoon ever haunt me? By night I find myself with wide-open eyes, my inner consciousness again a witness to that horrible scene.

"The other night, starting from an uneasy dream of Patrick, my heart throbbing violently as I thought I heard him on the stairs, when the cold, pale moonlight stealing in, lit up the faces of my poor little Maston and his dead father hanging on the wall, bringing me back to the dear reality and back to that wind-blown Friday in March, coldly bright, save when the huge masses of snow-laden clouds from the east obscured the sun, darkened the sky. Alas! that it should be so, Nellie, but the winds from heaven, ever since that day, cause me to start with nervousness.

"But I seem to be trying to get away from the tragedy of that day, whereas, could I pour out my over-wrought feelings into the lap of your mind, my only sister; could I sit with your strong, firm little hands in mine, I would gain mental strength.

"But now to nerve myself to the task of giving you some faint idea of the fatal scene on the ice of the Ottawa river six weeks ago.

"Miss Belleville and a young French government attaché, who is, alas, as I write, singing a rollicking French song at my piano, an inmate, now, of my house. But to hasten. A gay party they were, in gayest of spirits. Patrick went to the Buildings as usual in the morning, but came home to luncheon instead of to a restaurant, as was his habit. He ate, as usual, sparingly, but drank freely of the fatal cup, leaving me some correspondence to reply to, which I was to bring to the Buildings before 4 p.m.; leaving me for the ice, with a careless kiss.

"I sat to work at the papers, but felt so restless and uneasy I could only, by making a supreme effort, compel my mind to the task, determining then and there to hasten from the Buildings to my old watch-tower, Nepean Point, and overlook the skaters, for I feared me greatly that Pat, excited by alcohol, would, in a spirit of recklessness, skate on dangerous places, and perhaps fall in. Indeed, was I so strongly imbued with nervous dread, lest my fears would bear fruition, that I telephoned to Hay to send me a few yards of stout rope, which I carried with me to the Buildings, where I learned that my poor, ill-fated husband had left for the ice a few minutes ago. Hastening to Nepean Point, gay groups of skaters met my gaze, some of them in toboggan suits, all making a bright, fantastic picture, though with my nervous fears increased as I saw the numerous danger flag signals. There was nothing attractive in the scene.

"Very soon my eye lighted upon the figure of poor Patrick in the act of tossing, to a man who brushed the ice, his Oxford hat, at the same time drawing from the pocket of his skating jacket a bright red and blue cap with long tassel, that I had crocheted for him, and put it on, for the wind was blowing in gusts, and the crumbling ice from the skates at times filled the air.

"Oh, Nellie, how alone I felt! About me were the noises of solitude, the murmur of nature, her bosom heaving with the cry of a new-born spring, often causing me to start with nervousness, and sending my thoughts for one fleeting moment

backward to another time, when I had stood thus watching poor Pat, then as now ; but Mary Gunn's friend, McLean, had wandered thither also, and in his great moral strength I had found comfort.

"Oh, how they shouted to Patrick, as in foolhardy recklessness he skated on to the dangerous places, betting, too, I saw by his actions, and gaining false courage from the brandy flask he had in his pocket. I longed, as I stood amid the tall pines, for a huge vaulting pole to swing myself near him.

"The rope! He will be in! and rolling it into a ball I shouted, but some of the gay groups had already seen me, for they were just at the base of the plateau on which stand the Buildings. Just as I threw the rope, Mr. Beauvais, with only a momentary hesitation, one glance at his well-protected feet in new overboots, another at Patrick who was wildly waltzing with Miss Belleville, and he came toward the small summer-pier for the boats from Hull—for, woman-like, I had only succeeded in throwing the rope barely on to the firm ice a little the other side of the landing.

"Oh, how all too slow and cautious Mr. Beauvais' steps were, for Nell, dear, I seemed to *know* that Patrick would fall in; but Mr. Beauvais neared the rope at last, and by the aid of his stick drew it from a treacherous spot, when, with a scream, Miss Belleville broke away from Pat, just saving herself, for he was in.

"Two or three men, in their brave but futile efforts to save him, weighted the ice, some of them going under, but who were all saved except my poor husband.

"I don't know, Nell, how I swung myself down through snow, under-brush and soft mud, to the landing, but I was there, and on to what in summer you, on seeing the saw-dust washed in from the lumber, called Death's Yellow-beach—you remember, dear—and just there it was God's will I should break through the thin ice, but not wholly to lose consciousness, being just able to lift my arm at the bidding of Mr. Beauvais, who, having thrown the rope which was destined to save my life, by his standing at a certain angle, the rope under my arm, I was safely drawn to firm ice, soaked, chilled, trembling, and fainting. With the kindly aid of Stirling's brewer, who resides in the cottage on the pier, some planks were converted into an

impromptu bridge from the pier to the firm ice, when Mr. Beauvais, as I have been told, carried me to the cottage.

"Here, they tell me, I fell into a dead faint; on returning to consciousness my first none-too-pleasant sensation was the hot smoke-imbued breath of Mr. Beauvais in my face, as he leaned over my poor, limp, half-distracted self. As I lay on a lounge covered with blankets, near a hot base-burner, two women stood near, gesticulating and talking in scared whispers. Mary Gunn and Dr. Wright were there also, who had seen me through the unrobing and rubbing necessary to bring me back to the knowledge that poor Pat had gone out from my life, and that even then they were making vain efforts to recover his body, that the swift under-current had carried far beyond their reach. God be pitiful to his soul, poor fellow, for you have, perhaps, heard that all the grappling irons in Ottawa have failed in recovering the body.

"Dry clothing having been brought from Metcalf-street, Dr. Wright and our dear Mary Gunn brought me home; you know the rest, little sister, and can partly guess of how much home sweetness I enjoy, but I try not to murmur, and you will continue to help me, by your letters, to be brave and strong, for I require strength spiritually and physically.

"Tell uncle I am glad to hear he is well enough to be wheeled about in a chair; tell him also, dear, that the Confederation Life paid promptly the small life insurance, which I overheard Mr. Beauvais tell Mrs. Louis is but a drop in the bucket towards paying our debts; how little did I know the state of our finances when poor Pat was here. The thought of those debts is a horrible nightmare to me.

"Thank God, dear, for your coming wedded bliss. Roderick Gray is a noble fellow, and could not be otherwise, springing from such a stock.

"And so you, as Mrs. Roderick, Ross, Philbee, Stuart, Gray, are going to spend part of your honey-moon next summer at the dear old Sandbanks, after coming from Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, which I have heard is a ravishingly lovely spot. You will be married just one year from the time my wee pet Maston went to Heaven. Nell, dear, I cannot tell you of what a comfort it is to me to know that uncle is going to lend you to me next June, to welcome my new babe.

"And now, for the present, good night, with love and constant thought of you.

"HAZEL MEREDYTH CAREW.

"To Miss Carew, Broadacres,
"N. Toronto, Toronto, Ont."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HAZEL LOST IN TROUBLE'S HAZE.

Amorous indeed! though yes, t'was very nice,
His proposal ever was, just come and have an ice.

SIX months after the death of Patrick Leary, Hazel takes a siesta in a low rocker, her new baby in its pretty cradle beside her in the old smoking-room at Metcalf-street, recently converted, after a thought of the gay old boy's, into a boudoir for the exclusive use of Hazel, who, if one could say so of mortal, takes no thought of herself.

Beauvais, now boarding in the house, spends many a half-hour here with her, on various pretexts, making any excuse to be with her, to accustom her to his intimate presence.

Now, on this beautiful summer afternoon, one week after Nell's marriage to her own true lover, Rod. Gray, Beauvais, in noiseless slippered feet, his large, fine person enveloped in an elaborate dressing-gown of handsome brocade, emerges from his bedroom, the *Literary Journal*, live *Free Press* and welcome *Citizen* in his hand, and pauses on the mat of the door ajar, revealing the, to him, seductive picture of Hazel in her black gown, her slim white hands crossed upon an open letter from Nell and Rod., written at the Sandbanks.

Behind her, in the open window, the sweet odor of flowers from the modern casement boxes in inlaid wood, fills the room. The pink and white canvas hood outside shades off the sun's rays from a too-warm intrusion on to the sleeping babe and her sweet-faced mother, whose cheeks are flushed with the

fire of worrying thought, for money-matters are an every-day anxiety to her, and ere resting, as now, on this afternoon, she had resolved on begging for a statement from Beauvais which he constantly defers giving until about the close of the year of her widowhood.

A mouse would have failed to hear the sound of the softly-slipped feet of the ease-loving Beauvais, and, with thoughts now far away with the newly-wedded lovers in their honeymoon, she is mentally deaf to his approach. As he gazes, his breath comes thick and fast, a deeper flush coming to his face, as an almost irrepressible longing seizes him to take her in his arms and pillow her pretty head upon his capacious breast; and accustomed as he is, and ever has been, to gratify whatever passion is uppermost, he has a hard fight with himself notwithstanding her comparatively recent widowhood, not to gratify his impulse, and but that he is aware he will jeopardize his cause by awakening her to his presence in his arms, he would have gratified the carnal man.

As his eye rests upon her dainty form he fairly gloats over the beautiful creature he has snared, and as he stands at the door he feels that the man does not live who can move him from his coign of vantage as captor. He feels that he literally bars the door. With a sigh of pleasure and a long look he, as with the impulse of sudden thought, turns and makes for the stairs descending to the wide front hall, the portière hangings to the drawing-room are drawn back to make an air-current through the room, and at a signal from Beauvais, Miss Belleville, with a gay—" *Je suis le votre,*" joins him.

"Where does Mrs. Leary keep her tea?" he asks.

"Well, what next, from fire-water to withered leaves!" and the jewelled fingers play with the gaily-painted fan she carries.

"Have you not outlived surprise, Adele?" he asks, still beaming with pleasurable emotion, and not neglecting to press her hand to his heart, brocade dressing gowns telling no tales.

"It's in the cupboard, Beau, where the toddy-kettle used to stay, but was seldom at home in the old times," she says, jauntily adding, "her eyes show tears again."

"Yes," he replies, unconsciously, "but that only adds a gleam to mine. O. W. Holmes gets the credit of saying, and I go

with him, that 'easy-crying widows take a new husband soonest, there is nothing like wet weather for transplanting.'

"You old sinner," she says, tapping him on the nose with her fan; "go along with you, our puritan chaperon, Madame Louis, is due, and on her entry a truce to your *fatherly attentions*, as she invariably pipes forth after a call upon the innocents at Veteran Lodge."

Again repairing to the boudoir, the gay old boy has just time to brew a cup of tea over the spirit lamp, get the sugar from the cupboard, and take the cream from a maid he has summoned, when the Maltese cat, springing from his knee to the arm of Hazel, brings her back from the land of dreams, back to the inner circle of her new life web, back to the gloat-ing spider, coaxing his fly with sweet macaroons and steaming tea.

"Ah! this is refreshing, you must have caught me sleeping. Oh, puss, you must not awake my baby, Patricia. I have been so troubled with insomnia ever since—since last winter. I had been reading such a sweet letter from Mr. and Mrs. Roderick Gray, which acted as a sedative to me, and I have had a refreshing nap, but before that, Mr. Beauvais, I had my daily fit of troublous thought as to money matters, and resolved to implore of you not to allow to-day to pass without telling me exactly what baby Patricia and I have of our very own, for if we have enough to live on in a small house, I should like to give up all my boarders and go to Toronto, perhaps, to live near dear Nell and Rod. at Broadacres. Oh, what happiness that would be. Now you will," she pleads, leaning towards him, "you will tell me just exactly what baby and I have of our very, very own."

"Why will you trouble," he says, passionately, taking her hands in his, "is it so painful for you to consider yourself and babe a legacy to me from poor Leary?"

"No, no, Mr. Beauvais, it is not that, and if it were not for wee Patricia, perhaps, I would not be so impatient. I am impatient, I know, but if you knew what a nightmare I am conjuring out of the misty haze surrounding my money matters you would see that the sure and certain knowledge would be less hard for me to bear. Do, dear old friend, make up your mind to tell me exactly

what my small daughter and myself have of our very own; please tell me, you look serious, and yet glad, so I feel sure we are not so badly off, my little dot and I. Patrick owned some property in Lower Town. Yes, I feel sure we own some happy medium, neither 'prince nor pauper.' Come, tell me this very minute," she says, with pretty wilfulness, brightening with the hope that the freedom that a purse, not "trash," will bring. Yes, he is going to speak words of gratulation; what else doth mean the gleam within his heavy eyes, the fatuous lips half moving unto sound.

When, at this juncture, fate wills the dinner dressing bell to ring, and five gentlemen boarders, followed by Miss Belleville, come bounding up the stairs. Two of the men, being obliged to pass the smoking-room, look in, giving each other the wink, on seeing the rapt face of the gay old boy, his hand at the moment laid on Hazel's, resting on the cradle side. She has an intense dislike to this demonstrative habit of his, but does not like to hurt his feelings by checking his fatherly way of being kind. Rising, she thinks he is going to dress, and herself says:

"What a pity you have no time to give me the statement now," when his hot breath is in her ear, as he whispers, passionately:

"Of this be *sure*, your cunning little pet Patricia will always have a second father in Hugo Beauvais, and you, don't you yet know what you are to me?"

Here Mrs. Louis taps at the open door, while the gay old boy, getting his rather demoralized feelings in hand, goes to his bedroom.

"Mrs. Leary, my dear," says Mrs. Louis, in severely proper tones, "I have just come from Veteran Lodge, and our friends there agree with me that you are not old enough to chaperon yourself in the permitting even M. Beauvais to your boudoir. You remember my reason for coming to board here was a purely protective one. I am *innately* a *chaperon*, which is a *great* and *boundless* gift, and Monsieur Louis necessarily absent from the city so much, made it excessively convenient for me to break up house; but, as I say, our friends at Veteran Lodge entirely agree with me in the matter of *any* man being permitted to your boudoir, unless I am present."

"Please, Mrs. Louis, don't dish up my dearest friends at

Veteran Lodge, in the form of Grundy, they are incapable of making unkind remarks of any one, and understand the fatherly interest M. Beauvais takes in myself and babe; moreover, that with Col. Gray's sanction, he has taken my miserable money matters in hand, saving me the expense of counsel. But I have now a neuralgic headache, and if you will go and take my place at table I shall feel obliged."

"Indeed I shall, with pleasure, the dinner-table is all too gay for your weeds."

"Thank you. Did Mary Gunn say she would stroll over this evening?"

"No; but she said the air on the river would do you good, and to ask you to go over as soon as possible, as Col. Gray and M. Lisle Avignon intend sailing to Hull."

"I shall go. It will cure my headache—as soon as I see my pet safely tucked away for the night. Isn't she growing pretty, Mrs. Louis?" she asks, taking up the infant, its long, white embroideries sweeping over her own black gown.

With an expression of polite indifference showing even in the breast-bone of the chicken, she says:

"Excuse me, Mrs. Leary, but I cannot see anything pretty or refined in a posthumous infant. I would never parade her if I were her parent—but I could never be—there is something so indelicate in it. I look upon your posthumous infant as quite a solecism on society!" Which having delivered, without seeing the tears welling the large, grey eyes, she descends to dinner.

"So you are a solecism on society, my poor wee pet," weeps poor Hazel, retiring for privacy to her bed-room, not able to partake of dinner brought on a tray by Amarinth, an attack of neuralgia confining her to her room for a week, during which the gay old boy is absent at Toronto for two days. On his return, incessant in quiet attentions and enquiries, Amarinth informed her mistress that whenever he comes across the child's maid he takes wonderful notice of the baby, "that is, ma'am, for an old gentleman."

One day towards the close of July, Mrs. Louis, quite enjoying the *role* of mistress of the large household on Metcalf-street, urges Hazel to accept an invitation to spend the long summer day in the restful quietude of Veteran Lodge. Baby Patricia,

even thus early in her earthly pilgrimage, opened wide her blue eyes in delighted admiration of the floral beauties in Mary Gunn's garden, and Stuart Gunn, home for the holidays, from Ridley College, loves to see her clap her tiny hands over his gambols with the large family of dogs; McLean's fox-terriers, all save the one with his master across the seas being stabled and housed at the Lodge.

In the evening, lounging on the lawn, talking quietly of home matters, of the joy in living, the blissful content speaking in every line of the letters from Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, U. S., where Rod. and Nell are spending the last delightful week of their honey-moon.

"Knowing you will enjoy it, Hazel," says Mrs. Gunn, "Nell tells me she will write you a description of Lake Hopatcong before they leave."

"Oh, did she? I am glad. How happy our darlings are, thank God for it," she says fervently, and then in spite of herself, the contrast in her own life, tied and bound in the uncertainty of her position, causes a silent tear to drop to the black plaid bunting of her thin summer gown.

A lump comes up in the colonel's throat, for he is aware from Beauvais of how she is placed, at least in part, and to hide his emotion he strolls over to baby Patricia.

"Happiness will be yours yet, Hazel," and her hands are held tight in Mary's, who in sympathy has defined her thoughts.

"It is selfish in me, Mary, to damp our mutual happiness in the marriage that has brought so much joy, by contrasting my own sad lot; let me rather dwell on the additional gloom there would have been in my life had Nell been the miserable wife of Hamlet Rice. Yes, Mary, I shall at once and for always throw off this selfish thought of self, and live for the interests of my dear little Patricia. I know perfectly well," she says, brightening, "that when I tell Nell of what Mrs. Louis said of its being indelicate in me to parade the darling, etc., etc., that she will call her, as Mrs. Louis said, a solecism!"

"Exactly what the witch will do, Hazel; see, dear, you smile again, and father returns, he never could bear to see you sad. You look as if the *Citizen* had given you a bit of news, sir, and I see by your face you are not altogether glad."

"You have read me aright, Mary, I feel as if I had lost a son!"

"Lost a son! How so?"

"Listen!" and he reads,—copied from the *News*, Toronto.
"At Walmer Road, Glasgow, Scotland, on June 1st, Donald McLean, Esq., late of Ottawa, Canada, to Margaret Isabel Thistle, of Glasgow. Ottawa journals please copy."

"Donald married!" exclaims Mary Gunn, "truly, the ways of men are past finding out. We have lost him. I am sorry."

Hazel, saying no word, feels a strange tightening of the heart-strings.

"Donald McLean married!" cries Mary Gunn, anew, as if to accustom herself to the idea, so giving Hazel time to find herself.

Colonel Gray puffs at his pipe vigorously, as men will in endeavoring to rid themselves of some undefinable feeling of discomfort.

At the gate at Metcalf-street, Colonel Gray and Mary having strolled home with Hazel, the gay old boy overtaking them. Col. Gray drops behind with him, when Hazel says:

"Mary, dear, it does not signify my naming it now. I have always been under the impression that McLean had proposed to you and that you had refused him, is it not so. Was he not hopelessly in love with you—did he not propose?"

At this Mary relieves her sorrow at losing her friend, Donald, in a merry peal of laughter.

"Donald in love with me, Hazel! But you have given me a laugh, just what I wanted, and even though I shock the Ministers in this locality, I am not done yet. Donald amorous of me! Yes, he often proposed to me, but his proposal ever was, just come and have an ice!"

At Metcalf-street, a few evenings afterwards, Mr. Louis being in town, carried off his wife to make some calls. Miss Belleville and the gentlemen boarders had taken canoes to Hull, when Beauvais, telling Amaranth her mistress was not at home, and bringing a good deal of thought to bear upon his personal appearance, with a folded law-paper in his hand, looking very like a deed of trust, betakes himself to Hazel's boudoir, where he finds her busy with some pretty short fracks for baby. He enters smiling and debonnaire, a red rose

in the button-hole of his fine black evening coat, a bouquet of one of Hazel's pet blossoms in his fat hand.

"Oh, I thank you," she says, putting them in water, "I love mignonette."

"You are looking very well this evening," he says, sitting opposite, though very near, and playing with her artistic work-basket.

"Thank you, I am feeling quieter, so to speak, not so worried of late, trying to put away all selfishness in the interests of my little Patricia."

"I am glad of that, very glad, I love your little daughter," and he draws his great leather chair near her own. "Put away your work, I want you to look at me while we talk."

"Oh, excuse me, I believe I do treat you rather cavalierly, M. Beauvais, and I see by that formidable-looking document in your hand, that you are at last going to give me a statement which will require my whole attention," she says, with nervous eagerness, putting the little frock in the basket.

"Come over here," he said, taking her hand, "I would annihilate all space between us, so—" he says, passionately leading her to the great leathern lounge on which her late husband had so often lain.

"'Tis a warm evening to annihilate space, Mr. Beauvais, one had better create it," she replies, with a wondering smile.

"Nevertheless, you will humor me, and we shall be cooler if I turn the gas low," which he does, arranging the windows, causing a refreshing air current, then, seating himself beside her, he takes the rose from his coat, pinning it on the almost transparent black and white muslin of her bodice. Taking a warm hold of her pretty bare arm, his hot breath in her face, he says, in the heat of impassioned engerness :

"Hazel Leary, you know, you must, being a woman, know, that I love you ; you won't, you must not go," for she struggles to free herself. "Will you be my loved wife?"

"Be *your wife*!" she says, trembling, and pale to the lips. "Oh, let me go, say I have been dreaming, and that you are still my second father, my baby's friend and mine."

"No, I cannot say that, for I have ever loved you, my beautiful love, and have suffered agonies in restraining my avowal of it, but I can do so no longer, you must, you are, you

shall be my beautiful girl bride," and she is in his arms, hugged to his capacious breast. "Kiss me," he demands, fiercely, "you shall pay me for my long abstinence, you shall! you shall!"

All her struggles are in vain, she is held tight.

"Release me this moment, M. Beauvais, or I shall cry out."

"No, my love, you won't, for, let them come, the world shall find you in my arm if you do. Will you be my wife, Hazel?"

"No, I do not care for you, and shall *hate* you if you don't release me *at once*."

At this his arms unfold, and like a deer she flies, but the gay old boy is after her, and she is picked up in his great arms and carried back to the boudoir, the door shut and locked. Now, placing her in the chair by her work basket, turning up the gas, seating himself opposite to her, his quickened heart-beats preventing his articulating distinctly, he hands her the Deed of Trust he had brought with him to the boudoir, saying, thickly:

"Read that."

Taking it in her trembling fingers, her heart beating wildly, thinking it a statement of her money matters, she finds it a deed of conveyance from Beauvais to herself until Patricia becomes of age, when it goes to her, of the house and ground she is now residing in, with the furniture just as it stands.

"We cannot accept your gift. Then you have been our landlord, then the rent was collected by the agent, Young—I did not know," she says, falteringly.

"Yes, Young is my agent, but your late husband had paid no rent, I have his notes for it, and since his death the estate had nothing."

"And the property in Lower Town? what of it?" she says, brokenly.

"It has become mine, and is now on the market; your husband was obliged to borrow from me incessantly."

"Great heavens!" she says, wringing her hands, "What have we then, only the furniture?" she asks, not noticing that it belonged to Beauvais, being named in the Deed of Conveyance.

"It is mine, I bought it from Henry last summer, he was so hard up."

"Then baby Patricia and I are paupers, as also in debt!" and by a supreme effort she keeps herself from swooning.

"You are, unless you come to me; and is it so very hard a task to love me?" he pleads. "Do you forget the past; you would have been obliged to fly the house from Leary, had not this very love for you, that you look so coldly on, protected you from his violent fits of intoxication."

"Poor Patrick, let him rest," she says, her eyes drooped to her trembling hands, clasped and unclasped in nervous excitement on her lap.

"I will, though had he lived it would but have been to leave you for Miss Belleville."

"Is there anything more of agony you can crush me with, M. Beauvais?" she asks, in despairing tones. "My baby and I paupers; my dead husband faithless! God, what have I done to deserve this of Thee?" and her large, grey eyes dilate in anguish.

"All will be well, my love, if you will come to me, it is not such a cruel fate, you love no other man," he says, passionately, watching her, jealously. "I love your baby because she is *yours*. We can remove to a pretty house I have in my eye, in New Edinburgh. You and little Patricia will have the exclusive use of the rent of this place; as it is, you know how you stand, and of the large amount of money you owe to me," he says, eyeing her eagerly as he plays his heaviest card, her debt in hard cash to himself, which he knows she would work her fingers to the bone to try and rid herself of. "Will you not come to my protecting arms, my love, and let me teach you to love me, if not for your own sake, for that of the babe. The world is cold, Hazel, and what can your unskilled fingers do? you may teach book lore, but that, or any culling in fact, will necessitate separation from your little daughter."

The sly old fox has struck the right cord, for the mother leans to the table, her tears falling in showers through her slender fingers on to the pretty baby trimmings.

His arms are quickly around her, and in a fit of hysterical weeping, he is obliged at last to summon the housemaid, Amarrinth, who attends her to her bedroom. The day following, Beauvais, ascertaining she is unable to leave her room, telephones to Veteran Lodge, when Mary Gunn's loving care quiets her by reminders of Patricia's dependence upon her.

That same evening the gay old boy has a private interview with Colonel Gray, the result being a letter from Gray to Carew, asking his advice in the miserable state of Hazel's affairs, to which a curt reply came by return mail to Veteran Lodge, stating that he, Carew, washed his hands of the whole affair, and that he would write his niece, Hazel Leary, at once, that she should accept the offer of Beauvais with thanks, and that she must be a fool to have hesitated: that Beauvais had been to Toronto to see him, Carew, a short time before, and had told him of the state of the Leary affairs, and of what he proposed doing for Hazel and the infant, if she was agreeable: for himself, he would turn her altogether adrift, if she proved ungrateful to Beauvais. Winding up by stating that since he had lost the use of his legs, and so been confined to the house, he had lost thousands by some, as yet, undetected thief in his office.

In a few days, Mary Gunn, having baby Patricia and her mother to spend the day with her, informed her of the purport of the above letter, when Hazel, in much agitation, gave her one received on this same morning from her uncle at Broadacres, brief and stern, running thus:

"BROADACRES, North Toronto, Ont.

"MY DEAR NIECE, HAZEL.

"Your very generous suitor, M. Beauvais, came to Toronto a short time ago to see me with reference to the disgraceful state of your monetary affairs. There is *no doubt* that you and your child are paupers, and it is your *duty* to your infant to lift her out of the degradation of beggary brought about by your own *reckless* extravagance during your husband's lifetime. You had better *at once* accept his, Beauvais', generous offer. I have met with heavy losses, my confidential clerk, Pickford, having crossed the line with at least \$30,000. You may come here to Broadacres *one* week before you are married, or Veteran Lodge will, I dare say, invite you. Beauvais, of course, will now board elsewhere. You see, I take it for granted, you will be *sane* enough to accept Beauvais' offer.

"I expect Nell and her husband in two days' time, of course their home is with me, on account of this deuced paralysis.

"Hoping to hear that you have recovered the use of your reason,

"I am yours affectionately,
"PHILLIP TWETE CAREW.

"To MRS. LEARY,
"Metcalf-street, Ottawa."

"You see, Mary, there is no loop-hole of escape for me," sighs Hazel, hopelessly.

"Yes, Hazel, there is, if you will share Veteran Lodge with us, dear."

"Thank you, Mary, but it cannot be, we owe him *thousands*," she answers,—"her sweet face pale with sorrow, "and I must sell myself for wee Patricia's sake, and must endeavor to keep *him* from knowing that I loathe him in his new role of suitor," she says, shudderingly.

And so, that same evening, the gay old boy gives the news of his coming marriage to the pretty Mrs. Leary to the linguist Dame Rumour, Nell Gray reading it in the society column of the next issue of Toronto *Saturday Night*.

CHAPTER XXV.

ANOTHER EDEN—LAKE HOPATCONG, NEW JERSEY, U. S. A.

If all the year were June,
The world in woods would roam.



TRIP to Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, U. S., and locating at hotel 'Breslin,' on mountain Harry, from which place the joyous little bride, Nell M. S. Gray, writes the following descriptive letter to Hazel Leary at Ottawa:

"MY LOVED SISTER,

"Here we are my own dear, Rod. and I the happiest couple

on this big planet. I sometimes jump for joy that I am who I am, Rod's loved wife, and Hazel, listen! this is literally the *dearest* spot on earth to *my husband*, \$5 per diem; open your cat-green orbs my dear, for he pays another fiver for this child. He must have been saving ever since he was in long clothes to have so fat a purse. Speaking of the dollar, uncle gave me a cheque for \$500 to barter for some pretty toy at Gotham, so I treated Rod. at Dunlap's to a satin finish tile. I have a pipe that will make uncle Carew a dear old lamb; I have an unrivalled Parisian parasol for you, and a stunning nautical costume, in sailor blue, from Redfern for myself. Rod. says I am a duck in it, I don't know what he means, unless it's a water fowl. Rod. is the handsomest fellow at the hotel, and the most lovable, and the ————goodest.

"After leaving Toronto we spent one all too short week at the Sandbanks, had a right down dovey, dovey time. We rented McGinty's hut, one big room you remember; how shocked Mrs. Louis would be, I don't believe Louis was ever with her for one single minute without a chaperon. We, my own dear Rod. and I, from the Sandbanks made the run back to Toronto, taking one peep at poor uncle and dear old Bet, then we tripped down to Yonge-street wharf, taking the *Chicora* across the lake, making our way by Buffalo to the city of wonders, New York, quickly quartering at the Hoffman House. The first of the three evenings we spent quietly, and though we felt a trifle vernal, we wore a merely well-bred stare at the novelties about us. On the third evening of our stay we were invited to join an after dinner party at the Fifth-avenue theatre. I wore my white surah, with strawberry velvet Medici or flange collar, and took a man captive, it was a fellow called Roderick Gray. When the performance, opera bouffe, was half over we departed, driving for the Casino—I think I see your eyes distend—for the purpose of ascending to the gardens on the roof, electric lighted, a string band of sweetest music hid among a bower of flowering plants, dwarf shrubberies, palms; a fairy scene every part of it; dainty tables at which men and women in evening dress sat in dual company and regaled the inner man and woman on champagne ices or anything the *material* craved for, for there was nothing *spirituelle* about the scene, unless in the—cups.

"The wickedly pleasurable feeling one has while there, knowing all the time one would be better away, causes one to have a suspicion of Satan's horns and hoofs lurking very near.

"I don't see how any one can make themselves comfortable over the belief that one has no conscience, for I know full well that had I given way to the old Adam within me, I should there and then have forgotten our W.C.T. principles, and have lent my pink ear to the tempter, a N.Y. exquisite sinner from our hotel, and have eaten, drank and been merry; and even you, *bon enfant* as you are, would have felt a little wicked in the intoxication of the hour.

"Fancy, dear, one can see from the roof down, down into the interior of the Casino and hear a murmur of the play, recognizing acquaintances—if one has any there—in the boxes.

"Yes, in the subtle influence of these gardens, this child wished it were not wicked to enjoy.

"But, to a purer air and one more to your liking.

"After three days spent in a rushing whirl of sight-seeing, of which I shall fill your ears when I see you, we took the Central railway of New Jersey from the station at New York city, at the foot of Liberty-street, North River, for Lake Hopatcong, named by me another Eden. This modern one, situate, as I have said, in New Jersey, a short run of 50 miles from Gotham. We located at hotel Breslin, on mountain Harry, 1,200 feet above tide water, the bracing air nearly taking one's breath away.

"You, my romantic, loving sister, would have gone wild over the majestic scenery; even more prosaic I felt that I would not weep at losing myself with Rod. in some of the many entrancing mountain walks.

"I shall copy for you some of the ravings of an enamoured tourist, though were you here, you would endorse the universal verdict as to their being quite sane.

"So here goes for copy, with my soul on dinner, for the mountain air is an enormous appetiser!

"Lake Hopatcong, at set of sun, is a scene of splendor unequalled by any of its kind in the Eastern States, and gilding the mountain tops they stand out as if cut in a cameo, as the lights and shades fall upon their sides, and burnish the tree tops. Every rock and boulder, and each feathery cloud are as

distinct in the lake as in the air, and the gentle undulations of the water, as the night breeze ripples its surface, make it appear as if the lake were alive with rainbow colors, mellowed into indescribable hues.

"Again, a mass of dark clouds hang above the hills and with the black shadows of the mountains are reflected in the depths below, while sky and earth appear as if lighted up by a burning volcano, and descend in robes of fire.

"This effect generally lasts about half an hour, and is indeed a grand and awe-inspiring scene.

"These are but two of the many pictures in the panorama of cloud-painting that delight the eye, and but poorly describe the aspect of the lake from January to December.

"And now, Hazel of the distended orbs, having pandered to your taste for the beautiful, 'Richard is himself again' in the practical.

"You know that, at least, I do love the water from the time we used to dabble in the Thames (rivulet), running at the foot of our garden in our home, sweet home, at London, Ont., and then, as now, you loved the water lilies for themselves, I, to deck my small person; verily the child is mother to the woman! And so I love this beautiful Lake Hopatcong for the freedom a sail ever imbues me with, as well as for its capacity for tickling my palate. Listen, dear; I have eaten, with a lingering relish, while at our Hotel Breslin, fish of the finest flavor I have ever tasted.

"The lake has numerous boats, from a steam launch to a row boat, which tourists utilize according to fancy; some wholly romantic ones merely for the views. When I hear their soft undertones of joy, or look up from the hook I am baiting and see their rapt gaze, I think of your cat-green orbs, set in, what Bell at the Sandbanks called, your lovable face.

"Roderick, the darling, gets aboard for the view, too, but 'tis of this child, so he says, while prosaic I pay my 25 cents to drop my line, seeing nothing but the clear, mirrored lake as I watch for a bite, and a man's face, when, lo! don't this one make a haul! yea, verily! of black bass; oh, such lovely ones, as well as pickerel and perch.

"I would send you a copy of Eugene G. Blackford's U. S. Fish Commissioner's Report to make your mouth water, but

that you might talk, being feminine, and Ottawa's Abbot and ten merry men have had more than enough of scaly subjects, especially in American waters. Your guests, too, would desire you to do your marketing here, which would bring on that sore subject, Unrestricted Reciprocity, which I have just learned to sigh for. Tell it not at Rideau Hall or Veteran Lodge.

"But whisper, *ma seur*, under the stars and stripes one thinks—broad don't you know, and one wonders if the public treasury could not be filled other than by shutting out Free Trade with Lake Hopatcong fish and Boston physical culture waists. It would be rare fun to watch the nose political upturn as you poke up the feather of Free Trade in fish and health waists, eh!

"I feel, Hazel, dear, as I gaze down the great mountain slopes from the open casement of *our* room as I write, that I have told you nothing of this beauteous Eden. There is an enchanting view from the grand piazza of the hotel down, oh, so far down; on the level are ideal summer-houses occupied and owned by some of the many gilt-edged families of Gotham.

"The pretty, clever actress, Lotta, has an artistic bower for the golden sun-warm days, and moored to the water edge is her fairy yacht looking ravishingly inviting. The interior of Lotta's villa is well worth a visit. The mantel in her music room is a work of art.

"'Wildwood' is a wondrously captivating retreat, the little paradise being the home of Mr. Edwards, of New York city. A Mr. Poole owns a handsome villa with a tower, from whence one feasts one's eyes on the beautiful.

"A Mr. August Pottier, happy man! has an ideal cot, which, as one turns for another long look, causes one to wish that all the year were summer.

"Mr. Dunlap has a cot which is a realization of one's poetic dreams. Mr. Altenbrand has a very beautiful cottage. Mountain Harry is a namesake of the son of above genial New Yorker.

"But listen, dear, the summer bower of Dr. W. R. Vail, of Gotham, embowered in trees, is a miniature Eden, and I want to carry it away with me. A woman guest tells me the

interior is a model of comfort and luxury, so I am determined to sprain my ankle or otherwise make love to Dr. Vail so that he will bid Rod, and me thither.

"There are inviting coves, pretty canal bridges, enchanting mountain drives and water views which you must come and see, for they would take volumes to describe, and it is the Mecca of campers.

"And now, dear, a word of yourself. My husband is going to insure his life in the Canada or New York Life on our return to Toronto for fear uncle might change his Irish mind as to leaving with me his coppers. Rod. will do this because he has been so distressed at Pat's want of thought in your sad case. No man should dream away life here, a high mansion in view for—himself, with no thought of his wife, whom he leaves on this planet without even a summer kitchen she can call her own.

"We received a characteristic epistle from Uncle Carew. In it he tells us of your bankruptcy. Sympathy is not a good tonic or I would tell you, sister dear, of ours for you. Observe, Hazel, of how I speak in the plural, quite in royal style, though I am happier than any queen on earth, but I feel ashamed at parading my joy to you, dear, so sweet and good as you are, and who have missed so much.

"Uncle deems you fortunate in that M. Beauvais is *blessed* by your acceptance of his body of superior ponderosity as a wall between you and want. But my own dear Rod. and this small being in a white and old rose surah frock, we two *know* that the gay old boy, old enough to be your grandfather, is no choice of yours. *We know* you are giving yourself to him, for what he will give to baby Patricia.

"Listen, dear, but that I know that Scotch Donald has given the ring matrimonial to one Margaret Thistle, but that I read it in the *Years* and *Ottawa Free Press* Mary mailed me, I would protest against this incongruous mating of your sweet self and that ponderous body, M. Beauvais, on the grounds, dear, *that McLean loved you*, had a saccharine tooth for you; yes, he had. I saw it with these Lake Hopatecong blue eyes of mine, and I believe at this very minute, Margaret Thistle or no, that he weareth next his troubled heart a sketch of you. I saw him take at Ottawa on the lawn at Veteran Lodge!

"I think I see you start ; *but it is so*. Donald McLean loved you *then*, but alas ! for this child would have given him a sisterly welcome, Donald is now another woman's goods.

"Mary Gunn writes me that — Hugo—one must accustom one's self to call him pet names, has gone to his old quarters at the 'Russell,' so as to give Grundy no brew for her scandal pot.

"So you are coming to Broadacres *one* week before you are married ; how excessively kind of uncle ! Only he is ill and helpless, poor man, I would give him a bit of my mind on his munificent generosity !

"See here, dear, if you and your body of superior ponderosity come here on your wedding trip, the mounting scenery fills one with a love of nature, and from thence to nature's God, your wrapt feelings of love for the glorious scenes about and around you might cause you to think more kindly of the gay old boy.

"There would be one thing in his favor here, *ma seur*, 'tis that down on the level against the towering height and majestic magnitude of Mountain Harry as background, his proportions would become attenuated !

"Rod. has come to take me to dinner, so good-night, Hazel dear. My lover-husband says you will notice a tear drop on this page, but don't see it so, Hazel, for men are not infallible, and all note has its water-mark. I want you to be brave, and to remember that I am smiling as I write my name, that of

"Your loving sister,

"NELL M. STUART GRAY.

"To Mrs. Leary, Metcalfe-St., Ottawa, Can."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN GOLD SPEAKS, THE WORLD LISTENS AND OBEYS !

"It is not love, if what I've felt before
And called by such a name be love—a thing
That took its turn—that I could entertain,
Put off or humor—'tis some other thing ;
Or if the same, why in some other state—
Or I am not the same—or it hath found
Some other part of sensibility
More quick, whereon to try its power, and there
Expend its all."

IT is once more spring-time at the tower-crowned capital, that season when "young men's thoughts lightly turn to thoughts of love," and Miss Belleville meets the gay old boy on Sparks-street, got up regardless, a button-hole bouquet on the light *a-la-mode* overcoat, open on his broad chest, full of bass notes, which one hears as he half whistles, half hums some gay notes of the "Wenonah" waltz. He switches his cane, with its oxidized silver handle, as he goes jauntily along, not seeing the tall, large, reddish-blond person of Miss Belleville, done in fashion's shades of green, until she tilts up the brim of his silk hat with the edge of her parasol.

"How do, Beau? but my eyes tell me there is nothing rejuvenates a man of your make-up like winged love; the Brown-Sequard elixir, the Koch lymph are positively nowhere as compared to the magical influence of the latest passion!"

"You will admit, Adele," he says, beaming, for he is but just now returning from a drive to the C. P. R. depot, having seen his pretty bride-elect off for Toronto, whither he will follow in a few days, for he and Hazel Leary will be married in one short week. "Turn back with me, Adele, I am going to Metcalfe-street to give orders that the best of the furniture be conveyed to our new home in New Edinburgh; you will admit that my latest passion for Hazel has outlived the lives of dozens of stray shots from Cupid's arrows in the past. I feel

that the sweetest pleasures are not always those soonest gone, for in this, my newest love, 'there's not a fibre in my body but's on fire !' I tell you this, Adele, this newest love is not like what are dead ; just now, before she left the depot, walking to and fro from the baby in the child's maid's arms to the parlor car, 'with what a gait she moved !' I tell you what, Adele,

'Such was not Hebe !
Or Jupiter had sooner lost his heaven
Than changed his cup-bearer !' "

"There is no fool to equal an old one, Beau ! Now I *know* you are clean gone mad ! but nothing cures like stale possession. I have hopes of you, and that you will yet sit on yourself for all this rhapsodical raving."

"Not a bit of it, Adele, not a bit of it ; the very fact that half the men in Ottawa think her all too sweet will ever fire my love."

"How pleasant for you, Beau, if that sanctimonious Scotchman comes upon the scene ?"

His face grows black, for her woman wit has pierced a vulnerable spot.

"Did you not see the announcement of the cursed fellow's marriage in some of our Canadian newspapers ?"

"I did, and I saw something else, which was that you had had a hand in uniting Margaret Thistle and he. Oh, Beau, Beau, you cannot hide your moves from me. I have known you too long and too well. Well or ill, which, Beau, but *n'importe*, I am glad Hazel Leary will never know the love of McLean for her, which you and I saw so plainly, I *hate* her, in that she took Paddy Leary from me ; but I would have had him back, you know, had he lived. I am grateful to you, Beau, for telling her so, and that he would long ere this have left her for me ; yes, Beau, for me. The world is wrong side up since Paddy's gone."

"You'll meet, nay have, Adele, some other, you will nay do laugh and are *chic* as *chic* can be with."

"Yes, Beau, but none to me like Paddy."

The week following goes all too quickly at Broadacres, North Toronto, and Hazel Leary, in modest silken grey, with

white silk and silver grey adornments, pale, sweet and quiet, awaits the dreaded moment when she must go to church to change her name to Beauvais, and get her second wedding ring.

The gay old boy has been in the city for three days, afraid to have Hazel out of his sight, lest by some chance McLean returning might cross her path—a single man, and, as his own heart tells him, would tell his love at once, so snatching her from his arms.

He haunts Broadacres, is with her everywhere, having won Carew's liking by a certain oneness of ideas, a certain *savoir faire*; and by numerous attentions he has also captured the heart of baby Patricia by a gift of one of Edison's talking dolls.

The gay old boy, nervous lest his rival appear, counts the hours until Hazel will be irrevocably his, pressing his purse upon her, but she will have none of it, and pride aids her, and the deft fingers of our pretty Nell, with a dressmaker between them, they convert her extensive wardrobe of a year ago into a most nobby, up-to-date trousseau.

Upstairs in the large bedroom, at one time occupied by the now helpless master of Broadacres, but at present the snuggery of the wedded lovers, Nell and Rod. Gray, the latter off for a few hours from his desk in the Canada Life for the quiet little wedding at Christ Church, his little golden-haired wife, rather delicate just now, has been carried up in his strong arms.

"Rod., darling, you carry me up so comfortably, if you were huge Beauvais, I should say, coming from that city of gallant men, Ottawa, that you had had a good deal of practice in the art."

"You climb up and down too much, sweet; you should let Betsy do your climbing when I am down at the office," he says lovingly, looking earnestly into the beautiful face.

"Rod., dear, doesn't Hazel look just too sweet for anything?"

"Yes, little one, and it is an abominable sacrifice to give her to that old *routé*, who was not over good long before she was born," he says disgustedly.

"She is selling herself for baby Patricia's sake. Uncle Carew should have bought her freedom from huge Beau-

vais. Rod., Rod., your wee wife is tired, so, so tired, darling," and she nestles closer to his side.

"This ill-assorted union has been too much for you, little one; you had better not try to go into church, pet."

"Yes, that I will, Rod.," and she starts up, straightening the folds of her pretty plaided wollen gown, "when I think of my sweet, good, gentle sis., I am too angry with fate to be able to feel tired. You mean, nasty old Parcae," she says, doubling her small hands, "I should like the furies to break up that old spinning wheel and get their claws in your hair; it makes me feel wicked, Rod., when I see Hazel in her gentle beauty sold like a slave in the market. Ugh! Rats! and everything!" and two very unusual tears drop from the violet eyes on to Rod's coat sleeve.

"Don't fret, little one," and his hand caresses the beautiful golden hair, "she does it for the sake of her child. You saw what an agony it was to her motherhood on our proposing to care for Patricia, while she left us to fill some position. As things are, it must be God's will: the knowledge that she was separated from her baby as well as weighted by debts would simply kill her, while we know that your uncle's helplessness prevents our leaving him for a home of our own, where she, our loved sister, would be welcome as roses in June. No, I see no help for it, sweet, excepting one that is dead, which was that Beauvais would have pocketed his debts and let our dear Hazel go free knowing naught of them; but that has not been his game; he *will*, like Shylock, have his pound of flesh."

"One hundred and twenty-five pounds is Hazel's weight, husband," she says with a Lenten smile of abstinence. "Rod., darling, as you say we cannot alter things, it all amounts to this that when gold speaks the world's tongue, even Grundy's, is silenced; henceforth I shall believe in Edward Bellamy's scheme. Come husband, let us away, I hear the bass notes of the prospective bridegroom mingling with the laughter of Poll."

The gay old boy, feverishly anxious to have the knot tied; it is but 19 a.m. when the little party of four, with Betsy, baby Patricia and her maid, enter Christ Church, sombre in its Lenten gloom. So great has been the haste of the bridegroom that the rector only just appears as they do; stooping to our pretty Nell, on his way to the vestry, he says, smiling:

"I see you haven't run away from this one yet?"

"No, you didn't give me a chance, you married me straight through by the Prayer Book, the other time you stopped dead short in the middle of the service, giving me time to cut and run," she says with saucy witchiness.

But there is no escape for Hazel, she is married straight through by the Prayer-Book, as Nell had said.

As the rector had read the service the Irish setter had pushed open the inner baize door, letting it bang and causing the sweet-faced bride to look over her shoulder nervously, Nell's thought flying backward to the time she too had stood at that same altar with Rice, and had flown, on Providence lending her a way of escape. Rod., with the same thought, is looking down upon her lovingly as he passes his arm supportingly around her.

The service is over; the bridegroom shakes himself by the hand, and in a holdfast embrace claims his bride in more than one kiss.

The rector congratulates the gay old boy, and, while wishing Madame Beauvais every happiness, mentally wonders at the sacrifice.

Nell and Rod. kissed her quietly, while baby Patricia claps her tiny hands and laughs, as her pretty mother, in such a pretty gown, pleasing her infantine eyes better than black, comes to take her in her arms, whispering to her unconscious ears, "You are a pauper no longer, my baby, I have saved you from that."

At Broadacres, two hours slip quickly by ere it is time to drive to the Union depot to catch the Erie rail to New York, where Mr. and Mrs. Beauvais will only remain one week, Hazel not willing to be parted from baby Patricia, who is not yet a year old, and Beauvais in just the mood to be indulgent; not willing that the air shall blow on *his* Hazel, seeing to every article she puts in her trunk.

"You must take your long seal sacque, dear, I cannot have Mrs. Beauvais," he says, unctuously, "taking cold; you must have a new outfit from Redfern, love."

"For heaven's sake, Beauvais, don't teach her to be more extravagant than she is by heredity!" exclaims Carew, testily.

"I think uncle Carew is right, Hugo, the season is over,

one may say, and my wardrobe is very complete for just now, thank you."

"Your tune will be on a different key, my love, when you see Redfern's pretty things. I know what you women spend your adjectives on," he says, jocosely.

Hazel's woman's wit is set to work to get a half-hour's chat alone with Nell—set to work and baffled—for the gay old boy is on her heels everywhere.

"Dear, dear," she says, hiding with Nell in a wardrobe, as she hears him coming. "Is it to be ever thus? Am I never to own myself again?"

"No, dear, you are gone from your gaze like a beautiful dream," whispers Nell, as they hear him descending the stairs, asking Betsy, whom he meets,

"Where is Madame Beauvais, I can't find her anywhere?"

"I dinna just ken, sir, I see her wi' your ain sel' na lang syne!"

"Well put," laughs Hazel, saying ruefully, as they emerge:

"There is so much of him, Nell, he is excessively oppressive."

"Hugely so, my poor sis, the only place on earth he would at all wear an emaciated appearance would be at lake Hopatcong at dusk—as I wrote you from there—his ponderosity would blend to disappear, disappear to blend,—so to speak—in the hugeness of Mountain Harry as background."

"I wish to goodness he would go and spend his wedding tour there by himself, and leave me here with you. Oh, Neil, he is awful, and his kisses! Give me that sponge, there's a dear, until I wash off his latest. I just *hate* to be kissed as if a wet mop were dabbed all over my face; but there is the cab, Nell, dear! Don't fatigue your dear little self by coming down, Rod. will be up the minute we drive away. Take care of yourself, Nellie; don't cry over me, dear. This marriage had to be. Farewell."

As quick as a flash Nell is at the window, her golden head out to the eastern sunbeams.

"Hazel, dear!" she calls, "I'll take good care of your Solecism on Society!"

Her object is gained, for Hazel's sweet face wears a loving smile as she looks up at the window, the gay old boy turning likewise, his silk hat uplifted as he throws kisses even as they enter the carriage and are driven away on their fateful trip.

While Rod. bounds up stairs singing :

“ Shine out little head with its golden curls
To the world and be its Sun ! ”

CHAPTER XXVII.

LENTEN TEARS BREAK TO EASTER SMILES.

“ Man cannot triumph a whole life long,
For death is one and the fates are three.”

AT Broadacres, at the close of the early spring day, the fateful day of Hazel's gilt-edged marriage, the young husband, eager to be with his loved little wife, has come from the office of the Canada Life by electric speed, and now, revelling in the pleasures of home, sweet home, lounges in the comfortable drawing-room, bright with the lingering glow of the sunlit west coming in this as yet uncrowded Northern suburb from afar, over and through the evergreen trees of sweet-scented Deer Park ; bright with the glow of the open grate ; bright with the bloom of the conservatory in miniature, filling the south and west windows ; bright with Poll's plumage and laughter, with the lisp of baby Patricia, who is being indulged by Betsy with a half-hour's visit to the drawing-room ; bright, too, with Nell's golden hair and welcoming smile, and Carew's eagerness for city news and evening journals.

As Roderick Gray sips with relish a comforting cup of steaming cocoa, he says, watching Nell's pretty fingers busy with a tiny, dainty garment she is putting the finishing stitches to, her violet eyes ever and anon leaving her work to rest on his face.

“ By the way, little one, on reaching the office at 2 p.m. to-day, the letter carrier handed me a missive for Hazel, a travelled one, too. In the first instance, addressed to her, as a matter of course, as ‘ Mrs. Leary, Metcalfe-street, Ottawa,’ and

by the post office at the capital forwarded : 'Try Mr. R.R.P.S. Gray, Broadacres, N. Toronto'; the postman had been given it at the General P.O. here to ask me."

"Oh, show it to me, Rod.; what is the postmark, darling?"

"London, Eng., Nellie, and thinking it might be important, I forwarded it to Hazel at the Hoffman House, New York, where they will be on to-morrow. Did I do right, my own wife?"

"Yes," she says, thoughtfully, when seeing that her uncle is wholly absorbed in some new disclosures brought to light by his lawyers, and made public in the news items, as to Pickford's treacherous dishonesty, saying, aloud :

"Confound him ! if he ever shows his face in Canada again my lawyers shall supply him with lengthened quarters in the penitentiary."

"Did you know the hand-writing, Rod.?" she whispers, with a strange second-sight.

"I did, pet ; it was McLean's."

"Ah, something told me so ; follow me upstairs as soon as you can, dear."

After some sympathetic chat with Carew, also with congratulations that he will be soon on his legs again, and able to bring his sound sense to bear upon his business affairs, in a few bounds Rod. is seated beside Nell, in sweet content in their own snugery.

An hour's talk ere descending to dine, and they have come to the conclusion that the marriage insertion of McLean has been a fraud, and that possibly the latter, hearing in some way of her widowhood, has written her of his devotion.

"Yes, sweet, I believe your woman wit has solved it all, and the silence of McLean before to her is accounted for by the fact of his total ignorance of Leary's death, which knowledge, as you say, Nellie, may have come to him, alas, too late. Again, his having *implored* of me not to name Ottawa or our mutual friends there, proves to me that your idea of his having been in love with our dear Hazel is correct, and that 'twas his high sense of honor, poor fellow, that actuated him in his request to myself, as also in his resolve to tear his love for another man's wife from his heart, that has made him a wanderer for the past fifteen months."

"Poor Donald!" says Nell, with a tender pity in her tones, "and poor, dear, sacrificed Hazel! We must be very good to her always."

"Thank God for our great happiness, my precious little wife."

On the arrival of the Beauvais' at the Hoffman House, New York, on the evening following, at about nine p.m., Hazel sits listless and alone, amid the gay chatter in one of the elegant refreshment rooms, alone, for the gay old boy, having contracted in some way a sore throat on the trip from Toronto, has driven to a neighboring medical man, Dr. Knapp, for advice. As Hazel sits, unconscious of the looks of admiration cast her way, a bell-boy brings to her on a salver the travelled letter, in which we have heard Nell and Rod. Gray take such warm interest—the page full of apologies from the clerk who had forgotten to hand it to Monsieur Beauvais for Madame on their arrival.

With a start, Hazel takes it, retiring to a more secluded corner, her whole thought on Nell and baby Patricia, fearing either or both are ill. Tearing open the envelope hastily, she sees it is from Donald McLean, and dated "Morley's Hotel, London, Eng.," two weeks previous, with a feeling of a touch of home, of the long ago time ere she had become engulfed in this strange union with a man she had been accustomed to consider in the light of a father.

Her feeling is so strangely glad in the bare handling of the sheet of paper containing written words by her friend, that for a few brief seconds she is content to merely hold it, the contact seeming to lend her forgetfulness of the present. Suddenly upon her sensitive conscience comes the recollection that her friend has now a nearer friend than herself in his wife, and she must forget the past, and the fond but foolish idea of; Nell, that the writer of the letter in her hand has loved her; she must remember that Hugo Beauvais is not going to allow her to forget that he has bought her freedom, that she is his, as long as they both shall live; and with a cold tremor, so different to the warm glow of a few minutes ago, yet, strange to say, with no feeling of surprise that McLean writes her, she reads with quickened heart-beats, and in a tremor of excitement lest Beauvais return and find her so engaged:

"DEAR MRS. LEARY :

"It is now one year and some months since I called at your home in Metcalfe-street, to find you 'not at home,' at which, though taking the opposition benches against myself, I felt desolate in the extreme, for I had done an unconscious wrong to your since deceased husband in loving you. Yes, Hazel, friend, I loved you, but thank God was enabled to keep my feelings to myself, and not startle your pure and gentle nature, your loyalty to your husband, by permitting you to read my heart; man's natural selfishness in part actuating me, for in your knowledge of my love would have come banishment for myself.

"But let me do myself justice, my friend, and that I can truthfully say I deserve any praise in the line of conduct I adopted on becoming aware that I could not tear my love for you from my heart, is all owing to your own brave unsullied nature, for a man would of necessity become capable of better, nobler actions who loved you. On finding that my love for your sweet self grew and strengthened with every meeting, in spite of my efforts to banish your image from my heart, I resolved, and, as you are aware, carried out my determination, to leave Ottawa, not returning for one year. I gave my lawyers a power of attorney for that time, telling them I would not trouble them to write me, for that at the close of the year I would return for their statement. I also requested my friend, Rod. Gray, now your brother, to refrain *absolutely* from naming any individual or referring to social events at the capital, telling him I knew he would trust to my having the strongest moral and personal reasons for the request.

"You will see, dear Mrs. Leary, how weak I had become, how I endeavored to shield myself from hearing your name, to make it easier for myself to walk in the path of honor. To do myself a bare justice, let me tell you you had entered into my heart, taking it by storm, gentle as you are, at our first meeting in the long ago, and had it not been for my hurried departure to the Coral Isles of Bermuda, I had endeavored to win your affections, and beg for the priceless gift of your love;" at this Hazel gives a start, for has she not been bought, not her

love, 'tis true, but her freedom! she starts, though wholly absorbed in the first heart-stir she has ever felt as she continues to read: "but you know the rest, of how, on my return, the cruel tidings met me, of your having been betrothed to your now deceased husband.

"The fact of your being again free, and free for the past year, to be honorably wooed, has only *this day come* to my knowledge. In packing up my traps, after over a year's absence, to leave England for a solitary home at New York city, I tore the wrapper off of an old newspaper from Ottawa that I would not look at earlier, and there I read of the tragic death of your late husband.

"The steamer in which I had booked my passage does not sail for some days, and I have ascertained that every berth in the one—I just catch the mail for this letter—is taken.

"You cannot imagine the joyful eagerness with which I count each passing day, so lessening the time until I see you in your freedom, to be wooed. I may speak so now, may I not, so long a time having passed since your bereavement; and, blessed thought! with your own sweet lips you have called me *friend*, and so I am allowing myself, since an hour ago, on ascertaining your widowhood, to hope.

"God grant that this may find you well, and that you will say yes to my pleading heart. That you will be my loved and honored wife, will be now my constant prayer, until those long lengths of miles that separate us are bridged, and I have the great joy of seeing your loved face once more.

"And I am *ever yours*,

"In loving faithfulness,

"DONALD MCLEAN

"To Mrs. Leary, Metcalfe-Street, Ottawa, Canada."

"AN AFTER THOUGHT.

"If it should be God's will that by peril of land or sea I am not to experience the rapture of reaching you safely, I shall write at once to my lawyers, willing my estate, real and personal, to your own dear self; and so that I may have a place in thy memory, I would like you to be my almoner, and con-

tinue the subscriptions which I have given the past year to the charities of New York city, and at our own capital.

"But, I believe God is going to be very good to me in the desire of my heart, and that I shall soon—*yet how long it is*—see your sweet face, enjoy the bliss of your dear presence.

"Yours in hope,

"DONALD."

With a gentle sigh, and the low, murmured words, "So Donald is not married and loves, loves me," she handles the letter caressingly, then lifts it to her sweet, red mouth.

The very act recalling her to the actual position she is in, the two days' wife of M. Beauvais, with a startled cry she stands erect in the now empty salon, all unconscious that McLean, whose steamer has come in, and who is merely waiting for the train to convey him to Ottawa, has seen her from the corridor and come in unobserved, in her wholly absorbed state, and has seated himself slightly behind, but where he can see her face.

"Thank God, I have found you," he says, in impassioned eagerness, "Mrs. Leary, Hazel, you do not look angrily at me, I have stolen the pleasure of watching you read what I recognized as my letter to you; your sweet face did not reprove my boldness; speak to me darling, say you are glad I am come."

"Donald!" and with a cry of pain she points to her second wedding ring.

"Great God, I am too late! too late!" and he sways to and fro in the shock, and to Hazel's horror he literally turns grey, *his hair whitening*, his face and lips ashen, and the words break involuntarily from Hazel, at seeing the terrible effect of his grief.

"Yes, Donald, and alas, I know now that I *love* you, my dear old *friend*," she says brokenly.

At this, before either realise the act, she is held to his heart, his lips on hers, like a thirsty man famishing with drought.

"Sit beside me, Hazel; God! that this should be the end," and he groans aloud, his kindly blue eyes brimful of misery, as they devour her sweet, sad face.

"Donald, we read what I now know to have been a false insertion of your marriage at Scotland, in the *Ottawa Citizen*;

how well I remember the tightening of my heart strings as Mary Gunn read it, though I did not know then, Donald, of how I loved you, much less did I dream of your love for myself," she says, despairingly.

"Who is the man," he asks, in heart-broken grief, "who has robbed me of you?"

"Monsieur Beauvais," and her eyes droop in very shame.

"He! ah, I see it. I knew he loved you, who could help it; but he is unworthy of you; did no one advise you against this fatal step, Colonel Gray! Rod! Mary!" he gasps, like one distraught.

And in rapid tones of misery she tells him of the terrible fix she had been in, of the load of debt, of the pauperism of herself and infant, of her uncle refusing to give her a shelter, and of how, finally, she had succumbed.

"The machiavelian manoeuvres of the man you have married have been successful. God help us both, my lost, my *only* love, it was Beauvais who concocted the false insertion of my marriage."

"Oh Donald, is it, can it be possible!" she says, awe-struck, covering her face with her trembling hands, "but your words recall me to my vows of two days ago, and—of for better, for *worse*, Donald, we must part at once, and for always, for, alas, your dear presence would not make my duty to my husband an easier task. Go, Donald, M. Beauvais may return at any moment."

"I could curse him," he says, despairingly, "but that he is your husband. I will never be the same man again, my lost love, my twin spirit, my Hazel!"

She, pale as new-fallen snow, looks at him in heartfelt grief, feeling his words to be true as that his fair hair has become white in the shock. Nerving herself for what *must* be, she stands up, and in sweet, tremulous tones, her cold, nervous hand outstretched to his, says:

"Hush, heart, and long not—
What matter if the strong, wide-reaching day
Be long or short, the *evening comes alway*;
The evening hushed, and cool, and blest.
Be still, oh heart, wait for that long, eternal rest together!
And now we must part, my *only spirit-twin*."

"God bless you for these words, you will be only mine in the eternal worlds—love, farewell! one kiss, beloved. I shall not now go to Ottawa—my mission there is ended; I shall remove from the Hoffman House now, at once. You will remain, you say, one week. I shall then return here as they make me materially comfortable, though it matters not *now*. I shall work early and late in the mission field of St. George's church, giving my poor brain no time for thought."

"God bless you, Donald, farewell! Keep this, your dear letter to myself, and mark it 'too late,' else dear you know how it would have been. Pray that I may have strength to keep true in word and deed to my marriage vows," and tearing herself from his heart-broken gaze and hand clasp, she makes her way with trembling steps to, alas! *not* the privacy of her apartment.

In an hour's time Donald McLean has left the Hoffman House for outside temporary quarters, and Hazel, with the feeling that her recent painfully sweet sensations in the knowledge of her love for McLean have been disloyal to her husband, removes by bath and fresh toilette in a favorite gown of the gay old boy, the traces of her grief at McLean's heart-breaking sorrow and her own sad fate, greeting him kindly on his return from medical treatment.

The gay old boy, in raptures at her loveliness, will have her accompany him to be beguiled into laughter without effort by piquante Lotta at the theatre.

"But Hugo, you say Dr. Knapp forbade any other outing for to-night. Sit down comfortably and I shall make music for you instead."

"No love, that would not be to my taste, for the music stool is not near enough to me; at the theatre we shall be close and snug, and I believe in propinquity when with you."

The day following, though the throat is a mass of small white ulcers the gay old boy will not give in, insisting on sight-seeing, loving to witness the admiration his sweet-faced bride excites, and more in love with her than ever for the new gentleness and desire to please which is possessing her.

"We will take a canter in the Central Park to-morrow, love," he says, drawing her little form towards him, as, after a long day full of wonderful sights and sounds in this, our bright

American Paris, they walk in tired fashion along the spacious corridor to their own apartment.

"Very well, Hugo, I am glad I brought my habit; your kind suggestion, too, but with a sore throat one frequently feels languor indeed; I fear it is so with you, you ate no dinner. If on to-morrow you don't feel equal to flying against the wind, we had better postpone our ride until we reach Toronto. This is the fourth day of our trip, and I begin to anticipate our first home-bound steps day after to-morrow; dear Nell and my own wee Patricia are often in my thoughts."

The following day is canopied by a moody sky, and with just sufficient breeze to blow about an occasional snow flurry and to make a somewhat uneven jingle of the numerous Lenten bells.

Hazel, distingué in a tailor-made gown of brown, braided cloth, seal jacket, with high sleeves and collar, her shapely hands encased in brown Parisian kid, protected from the lingering breath of winter in a seal muff, a beauty bonnet of brown ostrich feathers on her light brown hair. The gay old boy, though still suffering with his throat, radiant with happiness, with the gallantry of the men of Ottawa and for the matter of that of the New York man also, walks or rides in the aerial car as they move about shopping or sight-seeing, Hazel giving him his head, coinciding in the desire of the gay old boy in purchasing gifts for Nell and Patricia, doing penance continually for the love she has for McLean, and striving constantly for the peace that she hopes will come.

"And now for our canter, love," says the gay old boy, having taken an hour's rest after luncheon.

"Gargle your throat, Hugo, while I get into my habit. No, you must not make a move, here are the implements; you have not quite spoiled me yet, for I can turn the tables and wait on you, at times."

"Yes, my beautiful ride, I will obey you," and he presses her to his capacious chest, "if you will call me dear Hugo."

"But Hugo, you were satisfied on my learning to call you by your Christian name, saying the other would come in time; is it not so?"

"It is, my love, but much will have more; I crave to hear it just this once, from the sweetest lips in all the world. Come love, try."

"Please, Hugo, let me off."

"I will, if you try now ; I want to see your lips curve, as you delight me ; try, love, try."

"Dear Hugo."

"Thank you, love," he says, kissing her passionately, "now, come, I am as happy as a king. See, I will be train-bearer to my queen," and he lifts up the long skirt of her green cloth habit, looking admiringly at the sweet face under the coquetish silk hat.

And away they go, even in the thronged thoroughfares, the *cynosure* of many eyes.

Thoroughly pleased with himself and his pretty bride, the gay old boy is in his happiest humor, when, in a fatal moment with a gay flourish, as he uses his white silk pocket-handkerchief, a wayward breeze catches it from his hand to be in turn caught by the ears and head harness of the spirited animal he rides, which so maddens him that he plunges, then dashes along in wild, mad fashion, when Beauvais, losing control is unseated and dashed to the ground, striking his skull and temples against the sharp edges of a large stone but just fallen from a waggon, making an ugly fracture and horrible wound.

Hazel, in her frantic efforts to assist him, is almost thrown.

The poor old boy is carried into the Wilson Pharmacy, for they are on Broadway, which has proved the Broadway of destruction to him, for in a few seconds he has ceased to breathe, having been almost instantly killed. The corpse is taken in an ambulance to the Hoffman House, poor half-distracted Hazel and a medical man who had been passing by following in funeral procession, indeed.

But the widow of the poor old boy is obliged, in her helplessness amid a city of strangers, to help herself, and aware that Roderick Gray cannot at present leave his little wife in her delicate state of health, sends, by the kind officers of the hotel, a telegraphic to Ottawa, which brings Colonel Gray and Mrs. Gunn, without loss of time, to her side, to find that the medical attendant, Dr. Knapp, had taken tender care of poor Hazel, as well as to the laying out of the earthly remains of her late husband.

And so, on the close of the eighth day from the time of her

leaving Toronto, the bride of the gay old boy, she returns, a widow, with his corpse, only remaining at the Queen City to pick up baby Patricia, and see our pretty Nell, who bore the news of the death of Beauvais with wonderful calmness, as she kisses the sweet face of Hazel, pale 'tis true, but the violet eyes see some magic touch of veiled peace underlying the real regret for the fatherly Beauvais of the long ago.

"You are your own mistress now, sister of the great, big wistful orbs, and I must have you to stay awhile after the poor old boy is buried. Thank God, M. Beauvais made a settlement upon you, and that you are labelled like the spool cotton, N. M. T. Hazel. Some people say they see the hand of the Creator in every act of their lives, but this child only sees the Master hand at times. Your posthumous solecism is growing in grace, Betsy having taught her to make a profound curtsy. There, I have brought forth a Lenten smile, come to us at Easter, dear,"

"But uncle Carew, Nell, he will not like to be bothered with us."

"Oh, yes he will, now that you have given up being a pauper; he has taken quite a shine to you recently, dear. I knew that *just now* he would be likely to hear my prayer, so I got myself up in white the other day, looking as much like a ghost as possible—though my own dear Rod. said I looked like an angel—and I told uncle Carew I might die very soon, and I wished him to destroy all his old wills, and that he needn't fuss making another just now, as he is still tied by the leg, but that I would get sick more contented if I knew such a monument of selfishness did not stand in my name; so my pill took effect, and he had his safe carried downstairs, and Betsy and he one day that Rod. took me out for a drive made a holocaust of the monument in my favor, and so, dear, if I live, *and I mean to*, we are to share alike."

"You dear little sis, baby Patricia and I are quite well off as it is, owing to the kind forethought of Beauvais. Nell," she says, gravely, "when you are quite strong. I wish you to take a little journey with me to our old home in London, and consult with one of the many legal firms there as to refunding, with interest, losses to anyone through dear papa's—sudden death; you will come, dear?"

"I will, Hazel, Rod. and I have spoken of this."

"Thank you dear, and now I must leave you, the carriage waits; good-bye, Nell, take care of yourself, little sister, we will come at Easter, *be brave*."

"Did you ever see this one a coward," she says, smiling, "but listen to a bit of news, Hazel. Uncle says that when I am well, Betsy is to take off that black wig she wears, that her hair is *red*; just fancy, *red*, pure and simple. He hates wigs, and he says further that she has a birthmark on her left cheek, which he says would look better painted, than with that unsightly black patch we have never seen her without. Yes, I thought I would give you an eye-opener. He further says he has written his lawyers to invest \$10,000, ten thousand dollars, in her name, Elizabeth Elspeth Ross, and says she is not to be paid like a servant any more. He says she has proved so faithful—which is true. I tell you what it is, Hazel, they have grown quite chummy, and but for the Carew pride, and that he told my husband the other day that he would not marry any woman on the top of this round globe, we might prepare for a carrot-locked step-aunt."

"Oh, Nell!"

"For a fact! Hazel, as he of the Surf Beach House would exclaim, only uncle Carew really said something too emphatically wicked—at least for Lent."

Here Mary Gunn and Colonel Gray came upstairs to take a tender leave of our pretty Nell, the parrot making a great chatter over the bustle of departure.

In the meantime, Donald McLean, making a brave effort to take up the threads of interest in his life of months ago, his old friends supposing from his altered appearance that he has had a heavy fit of sickness, respecting his reticence do not force a confidence. On the second day of his return to the Hoffman House, murmurs of the sudden death of a late guest from Canada came to his unlistening ears, when some one, turning to him, puts the question in careless fashion as to whether he had known Monsieur Beauvais, at which he starts, violently agitated, excuses himself on the plea of sudden illness, and realizes it all in the streets, walking miles whither he notes not, calling himself wicked and heartless for the smothered joy at his heart. Then he thinks there may be some mis-

take, and doubts the truth of what he has heard, when, buying the news journals of the past few days, returning to his hotel, retiring to his own room, reads till the news is *real*. Then on his knees he thanks God for the knowledge of sweet Hazel's love, and for the strength given them both in their last interview to part and do their duty in that state of life unto which their Creator had called them.

Then, he eats the first meal with any relish that he has partaken of for months, and goes to rest with smiles of thankfulness to rise a new man, to write a long letter to Rod. Gray which brings smiles of joy to Nell; another reached Colonel Gray, Veteran Lodge, Hazel's new home, bringing great gladness to the loving hearts there.

Every week, bringing a long letter to Colonel Gray, together with the New York Magazines, to Mary Gunn and Hazel Beauvais, who looks and quietly watches for their coming.

At last the waiting heart can bear no longer the separation from his spirit twin, and so the close of three months finds Donald McLean again at Ottawa, and some part of every day or evening, with quick elastic step and love-light in his honest eyes, he finds his way to his sweet Hazel's side.

Easter Bells!

Bring to our lovable Hazel her third wedding ring a year from the Lenten season that saw the gay old boy laid low. His widow and McLean experience the great joy of standing side by side as the clergyman pronounces them joined in a heart to heart life union, aye, and through eternity.

A large party, consisting of Colonel Gray, Mary Gunn, happy Roderick, a father now, and his beauty wife the little mother Nell, their year old son baptised "Philbee," for Nell would have it so, for by that name she had met her own true lover Rod.

The bride, Hazel McLean, sweeter than ever in love's magic land, Donald blythe and gay, the wish of his life secured.

Maud White, the new made wife of Alex. Burns of the gas office at Hamilton, with Beaver of Toronto, all made a merry trip to New York city, the future home of Mr. and Mrs. McLean, who had been married by Rev. Dr. Rainsford at St.

George's to the tuneful rhythm of Easter bells, then taking one of the splendid steamers of the White Star line for a trip to the mother isles.

All the wedding party accompany them, leaving on the great dock only Colonel Gray, Mary Gunn, and Beaver. Maud and Alex. Burns are the guests of Hazel and Donald McLean, in return for the brave act of Maud in sending the telegram bringing Roderick Gray to Christ Church, so preventing the life wreck of Nell's happiness.

As the loved ones, from Veteran Lodge grow smaller until lost in the ever increasing distance, as a brightener, Nell says, taking Hazel's slim hand in hers with its *three wedding rings* :

"Mary Gunn told me that Mrs. Louis is shocked to prostration over your three husbands, Hazel. She says a posthumous infant was bad enough, in fact indelicate in the *extreme*, but that it will be *excessively* awkward for you in heaven, when they *all* claim you, and that really this one should engage a chaperon for you."

"Did she mean for heaven?" laughs Rod., with loving hands drawing the white tam-o'-shanter closer over her golden hair.

"Heaven only knows, Rod. Whisper, husband ; where are Maud and Alec?"

"Billing and cooing somewhere, little one, and if they are only half as happy as we are they will be often taken so."

"Donald and Hazel are a heavenly couple, Rod ; he worships her. Rod., my own dear Rod., this is a beautiful world. It grows dusk ; come and see if nurse has our boy Malbee snug in his cot, or on his shelf, poor little man."

"Yes, my precious little wife, come along."

In their large, state room the twin spirits, Donald and Hazel, seated side by side, talk in low tones of the dear present.

"At last, my own, my long-loved Hazel, together, together!"

There is an ecstatic pause, when he says :

"I must show you a sketch I made of you in the long ago time of my tribulation."

"Nell saw you take this sketch, dearest ; she has told me

of it, the witch. But you have looked at me through rose-colored glasses, my darling."

"No, my own loved Hazel, but with the eyes of love, and no flattery. Yes,

'Your face is sweet and debonnaire,
I cannot call it dark or fair;
Sweet face, dark eyes, and light brown hair,
And blessed fate—I love it so.'"

"My *only* love, my Donald! we are wondrously happy," she murmurs.

"My wife!"

THE END.

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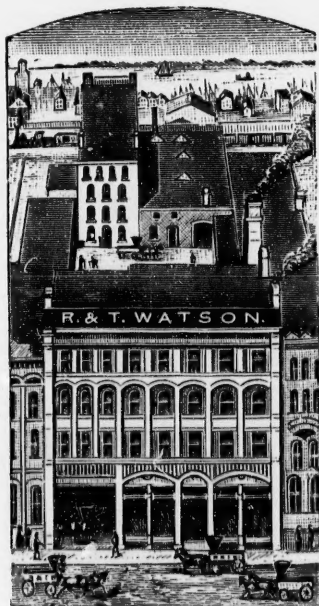
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